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READER

The Plants Issue

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Farm & Garden

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I KNOW A fair amount about plants, and gardening, and the pending environmental disaster that we euphemistically refer to as climate change. In fact, I spent two and a half years as a small-scale organic farmer in Detroit, and could probably have thrown together a good 5,000 words about common household substances that not only support your gut microflora but will double the size of your beets—which'll prove helpful in preparing for the next Ice Age. But what I really wanted to write about for this issue was my favorite, local plant-based restaurant.

The problem is, Chicago doesn't have much in the way of plant-based restaurants—different from vegan places in that they avoid gluten and soy products, sugar, and refined oils, as well as dairy and meat, and use only minimally processed foods. Turns out I'm a bit of a bubble baby, and can hardly eat anything that most humans consider "food." It's not a diet folks tend to turn to solely for political or

ethical reasons, because it's not an easy way to eat. But it keeps me alive. And I like it. Making cheese out of nuts is a good time!

Hog butcher for the world, indeed. The lack of plant-based restaurants in Chicago is an odd blind spot in this otherwise food-focused town. Elsewhere such cuisines are easy to find. In Toronto, I dig Planta on Bay Street. In the Detroit area, there's GreenSpace Cafe in Ferndale. In Vienna, Austria, I'm partial to Simply Raw Bakery. In New York City—not my favorite town, but there are a few solid plant-based eateries to choose from. And in LA it can be hard, let's just say, to find a place to eat that doesn't have a wide range of plant-based options. So why not here?

It's a bit of a head-scratcher, and you may find it even more odd after you've read through the Plants Issue. Here you will read about all sorts of amazing qualities our rooted friends have and foster in others—they are healing, they are ancient, they cleanse the air and the earth of

toxins. They are inherently political, and sometimes quite dangerous for cats. John Porcellino even drew up a "Sunday Strip" (read: full-color) version of *Prairie Potholes* for the issue, to introduce us to a few of his favorite leaf-covered buddies. Plants are fun, and pretty, and also a complicated pejorative when describing a certain breed of unusually popular hip-hop artist.

They are also extremely tasty. I realize that extolling the virtues of the world's vast expansion of flora by describing how delicious plants can be when prepared unusually but properly is a bit like suggesting we save the whales to better preserve the ancient art of scrimshaw. But if a plant-based eatery opens up here in town someday soon, you'll see.

Until then, we have jibaritos.

(I know I'm getting to be like Ben Joravsky and his TIFs with those amazing Puerto Rican sandwiches. By the way, if you want to read Ben Joravsky on TIFs, you can also do that in this issue.) —ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE



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CITY LIFE



Edgebrook seed library © COURTESY CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Growing archive

Hyperlocal seed libraries preserve diversity in the food chain.

REMEMBER THOSE GIANT but strangely juicy and fruitful tomatoes from your grandparents' backyard garden? Did your mother have a prize-winning squash at the county fair? If your mom or your grandparents are still around, ask them if they kept any seeds. Seed libraries have been around for centuries. The structure can be as simple as a few labeled envelopes filled with harvested seeds from favored plants. Most seeds last for a long time if kept cool and dry. Some seeds do go bad eventually, so it's good for seed librarians to make sure they have plenty on hand for plants that they would like to continue propagating. Archives of seeds preserve diversity in the food chain and maintain heritage varieties of beloved plants.

Patrons of the Chicago Public Library system will be pleased to find that several branches have created their own hyperlocal seed libraries-within-the-library. To contribute, save seeds from plants after their har-

vest, dry them properly, and donate them to the library (giving others the chance to try out your favorite strain of bok choy). You can also start from scratch and receive seeds that you may not have been able to find at the garden center. The Sulzer Regional Library has just started their own version, and vis-

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itors can stop by the information desk to view and collect seeds. The Harold Washington Library Center downtown offers harvested seeds alongside gardening resources at the Business, History, and Sciences division desk on the fourth floor. Call first to see if they have started up for the season.

—SALEM COLLO-JULIN

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CITY LIFE



Field & Florist owners Heidi Joynt and Molly Kobelt
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SHOP WINDOW

Slow blooms

Floral arrangements for freshness and sustainability

FIELD & FLORIST, which opened in 2017 in a charming basement in Wicker Park on Division just east of Damen, grows its flowers on a 30-acre farm in southwest Michigan. Owners Heidi Joynt, 36, and Molly Kobelt, 32, say this land—surrounded by woods, vineyards, and blueberry fields—is the beating heart of their business. “Farm-to-table” isn’t just for restaurants anymore.

Joynt says she wanted customers to interact with regional growers who are also designers. “In today’s economy of Amazon-available-anything, I think it’s increasingly important to make these connections to gain a little insight into everything from the labor required to produce something to the necessary seasonality of flower varieties,” Joynt says. “It’s important to see the world as a complex web of interconnected systems.”

Field & Florist uses organic fertilizer made from cow manure, mushroom compost, and a mixture of fish emulsion and kelp spray, and avoids pesticides. “While the environment is idyllic, I would say that the farm itself probably doesn’t look like what people imagine when



Field & Florist reopens April 3, 2019
 © JACLYN SIMPSON

FIELD & FLORIST
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they think of a flower farm,” says Joynt. “It’s a wild and largely unmanicured place. It’s a place that’s about serious production for us, not creating an aesthetic experience for imagemaking. I think there’s a different kind of beauty in that.”

Aside from floral arrangements and a unique selection of home goods and gifts, Field & Florist sells local products like mobiles handmade by Curio Curio, ceramics by Angela Vernachik (including the popular “convertible vases,” which adapt to shrinking bouquets), and postcards and book bags designed by the Normal Studio. The shop celebrates the high and low: from Italian hand-blown glass to run-of-the-mill garden pruners. “We carry luxury candles and fragrances from Regime des Fleurs but will get our hands dirty and pot up an inexpensive house plant for you,” Joynt says. “It’s a place that reflects who we are.”

Field & Florist offers wedding and event floral design, special deliveries (\$75-\$100), and a subscription service, which sends weekly floral arrangements to homes, restaurants, and cafes. The shop also hosts gardening workshops, such as April’s ranunculus-focused “spring centerpiece” or September’s dahlia-intensive course at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

After briefly closing for the winter, Field & Florist reopens April 3. For the upcoming season, Kobelt raves about their greenhouse full of ranunculus—in colors like chocolate, pale peach, and mauve—and anemones coming into full bloom between April and May. The store will also launch a Web shop for floral deliveries. “Through flowers, we are allowed to be present in people’s lives during some of the most significant times of celebration as well as the hardest times of grief,” says Joynt. “It is a privilege.” —ISA GIALLORENZO



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Wild Onion © LINDA N./FLICKR

FERAL CITIZEN

What lies beneath

As our world greens up this spring, a primer on the wild plants we call weeds.

By **NANCE KLEHM**

Energy has seemed to be in stasis, the last throes of winter killing or wiping clean what no longer needs to exist. For us Northern Hemispherians, the change began in early February, the midway point between solstice and equinox, a time long recognized as the start of the agricultural calendar supported by old Western traditions and the Lunar New Year.

In February, sap began moving upward from trees' roots into their branches, slowing swelling and soon bursting the leaf buds set last fall, making it possible for us to carefully collect the sugar of beeches, maples, and sycamores and boil it down into syrup on our stovetops. It's also the natural start of the birthing of lambs and kids releasing the flow of ewe and nanny milk. The vernal equinox officially makes its appearance on March 20, next week. Time to celebrate the thaw and the flows that are coming with it.

Detritivores—the myriad species hidden in the leaf litter—become active and wake up

the food chain—first the bacteria, followed by springtails, worms, millipedes, and countless crawling and swimming others along with the molds, yeast, and other members of the fungal queendom. The soil's frost line breaks, soil testing begins, perennial plants burst from their crowns, seeds of everything imaginable germinate. Our world greens up.

And in spite of our best gardening efforts, most of the plant diversity in the city is found in areas less humanly attended—the railways and industrial corridors, the shorelines of our river and industrial canals, the margins of our parks and backyards, and our urban vacant lots.

Filled with life and human stories of human use, “vacant” lots—called such due to what's not there—have a lot there. Buildings, along with their social dynamics and histories, have stood on these grounds—iterations of construction forgotten can be rediscovered with a quick investigation of property records and a chat with a neighborhood elder; taking a look around at the wild plants on the site →

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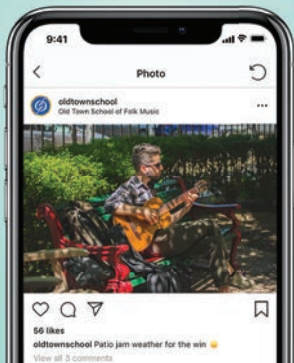
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CITY LIFE

continued from 5

should get you started on a particular lot's story.

Among our wild plants, we have plants that we term “weeds,” which isn’t so much an official designation as it is a reflection of our attitudes towards plants we don’t appreciate in our gardens and landscapes. And still, weeds are the frontier workers, the border crossers, the explorers, the colonizers after the plague. They cultivate soil, provide habitat and a food source for pollinators and other insects, small mammals, amphibians, lizards, and birds. They make what would be a truly vacant city lot after a teardown a living habitat moving toward healing and ecological complexity. Weeds are the healers that connect with the disturbed, compacted, depleted, and contaminated soils, settle in and make use of what little they can find with their agile plant skills and get to work making it and the air we breathe better.

Weeds produce seed prodigiously and house several methods of distribution over a wide area. Perennial dandelion goes from flower to seed in ten days, launching 150 to 200 seeds from each of the average ten flowers per plant each season. Annual horseweed sends approximately 200,000 seeds into the wind during its single season. These plants’ seeds are carried by wind, fur, paw, feather, foot, clothing, water-ship ballast, or digestive tract. Many annual weeds, once ripe, self-propel their seeds impressive distances. Seeds packaged in a fleshy covering or “fruit” are distributed from the backside of animals and birds to the soil surface complete with a coating of fertilizer or nutrient to ensure a good beginning/launch/debut as a seedling.

I want to give you a handful of some of the most common and earliest weeds (and a fungi) to emerge in our landscape:



Chickweed (*Stellaria media*): A watery, tender, somewhat oily plant (omega-3!) that is a nice raw nibble and often alive and well all winter under snow drifts. © AJC PHOTOGRAPHY



Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*): A ubiquitous, cheery heavy lifter of iron, magnesium, calcium, and potassium. Eaten raw or cooked, drank as a tea or wine, supports the waterworks and the waste treatment organs of the body—kidney and liver. © EDISO8/FICKR



Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*): Found in shady areas, and able to pass through four life cycles in one season, making it a top-hated weed. Adds a peppery taste to eggs and potatoes. © DANIEL JOLIVET



Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*): Use as a peppery bitter salad or salad green. © ANDREAS ROCKSTEIN



Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*): A marker of nutrient-rich soils as well as a protein and iron powerhouse. Serve up in soups or pasta, lightly sautee or drink as a tea. © SVKLIMKIN



Turkey tail (*Trametes versicolor*): Shelf polypore mushrooms that are mild tasting, but are usually prepared as and taken in tincture form to bolster animal immunity. © BERNARD SPRAGG



Wild Onion (*Allium* spp.): Also often alive through the winter if protected under a layer of duff or snow—cut tops and use as a sharp chive. © TOSHIHIRO GAMO



Yellow Dock (*Rumex crispus*): Tangy, just-emerging leaves that can be enjoyed raw or lend interest to curry. Soon thereafter they are too bitter for eating but make a powerful liver medicine. © F. D. RICHARDS

Note: You can identify and study these plants without eating them—then carefully sample them elsewhere where rest assured the soil they are growing in is not contaminated.

What stood there, what stands there, what happened there, what is happening there, what grows and thrives in these areas that are recovering, outside of proscribed use, are all available to our imaginations, eyes, and hands. On this vernal equinox, this Full Sap Moon, visit one of the 32,000 outdoor classrooms in the city, your most local “vacant” lot, and commune with what emerges and thrives there. 🌱

🐦 @NanceKlehm



CIVL cochair Robert Gomez speaks at a November public meeting on the development of then-proposed Lincoln Yards. KRIS LORI

POLITICS

A tale of two gardens

Woodlawn gets a grocery store and Lincoln Yards gets \$1.3 billion in Mayor Rahm's Chicago.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

In honor of this week's plants issue, I'm going to write about . . . TIFs!

Now, I know you're thinking—man, this dude will look for any excuse to write about TIFs. And while that may be true, in this case the idea belonged to my editor, Anne Elizabeth Moore—so send her your bouquets of appreciation.

Actually, the topic is fitting for our special issue because the city's tax increment financing program is the perfect metaphor for the bogus and biased economic development policies under Mayor Rahm. Follow me, folks . . .

Basically, TIFs are the surcharge slapped on property tax bills to fund development that will generate more taxes in future years. The TIF program is the largest source of discretionary spending money the city has—collecting about \$660 million last year alone.

So, if you think of TIF property tax dollars as the nutrients that fertilize development—especially in low-income communities—then

the way Mayor Rahm distributes this money helps explain why some areas are overgrowing with condos and commerce while others are made to feel lucky to get so much as a grocery store.

And that brings me to the latest chapter in my ongoing series on the Lincoln Yards TIF deal—aka, the fleecing of Chicago by Mayor Rahm as he dashes out the door.

Lincoln Yards is massive project combining upscale housing and retail development that Sterling Bay is planning to build in the old industrial area along the banks of the Chicago River, roughly between Fullerton and North Avenues. Cheered on by Mayor Rahm and Second Ward alderman Brian Hopkins, real estate development company Sterling Bay is seeking \$1.3 billion in property tax dollars to underwrite the project.

In past columns, I've explained how there's no adequate oversight for the deal and how it will jack up your taxes, even as the city claims

it won't. Now let's examine how it perpetuates the policy of favoring gentrifying communities over poorer ones.

To prove my point, I'll call Rahm Emanuel to the stand. Yes, it's like the moment in *Inherit the Wind* where the Clarence Darrow character calls William Jennings Bryant to testify.

On March 7, as the council's zoning committee—speaking of rubber stamps—voted 9 to 4 to OK Lincoln Yards, Rahm issued a press release declaring, “While the City Council was deliberating Lincoln Yards today, thousands of south side residents and shoppers turned out to open the first grocery store to operate in Woodlawn in more than 40 years.”

So, Woodlawn finally gets one—count it, one—grocery store. And Lincoln Yards gets \$1.3 billion in property taxes. So, let's do some math. It's going to cost the city an estimated \$10 million to subsidize one grocery store in South Shore. So \$1.3 billion could build you hundreds of grocery stores all over the south and west sides—man, with that cash we could turn every food desert into an oasis

For the record, there is a TIF in Woodlawn. It generated \$3.5 million last year.

That's way less than what Rahm wants to give to Sterling Bay. But it's more than the Austin TIF generated (\$1.2 million) or Roseland (\$669,000) or the Englewood Mall (\$869,000) and 79th and Vincennes (\$204,000) and so on and so forth.

In fact, you could add up all the money coming out of all the TIFs in all the struggling south and west side areas and it wouldn't come close to equaling the \$1.3 billion Mayor Rahm is forking over to Sterling Bay.

Why does this unfairness persist? Because there's an inherent flaw in the TIF program that guarantees the rich will benefit over the poor.

When a TIF district is created, the city essentially freezes the amount of property taxes that schools, county and other governmental bodies can collect from that district for 23 years. Instead, all the new property tax dollars paid by taxpayers in that district go to the TIF fund.

As more development occurs in that district, and more property taxes are paid, more money goes to the TIF fund.

TIFs were originally intended to eradicate blight in low-income communities. But thanks to loopholes in the state's TIF law all communities are eligible to create TIFs—even if they're neither low-income nor blighted.

In fact, I just saw that Kenilworth—one of the state's richest north shore suburbs—is thinking of creating a TIF. A TIF in Kenilworth is a true sign of the pending apocalypse.

The point is—as long as all communities have TIFs, the gentrifying ones will gather more money than the poorer ones, for whom the program was created. It's a fundamental flaw that guarantees that the Woodlawns and Austins and Englewoods get less than the Lincoln Parks, Wicker Parks and, apparently, even Kenilworths of the world.

Back in 2011, when Rahm first ran for mayor, he vaguely talked about reforming the TIF program. Unfortunately, that was one of the first promises he broke as, once in office, he accelerated the inequities with one unfair TIF deal after another, culminating in the abomination known as Lincoln Yards.

As a result, neighborhoods on the west and south sides have bottomed out as crime rose and people left. Meanwhile, the north and near north and near west and near south side communities flourished.

To eradicate these inequities we should abolish the TIF program and fund economic development with money taken directly from the budget.

That way all 50 wards would receive an equal slice of the pie. By the way, this proposal was made years ago by former 38th Ward alderman Tom Allen, as he left office to become a judge.

You should have listened to him, Chicago.

If folks in the Second Ward still want to subsidize Lincoln Yards, they can create a special service district. That's a lesser known program that allows communities to tax themselves to finance whatever little development their hearts desire.

Good luck selling that deal to your second ward constituents, Alderman Hopkins.

Here's hoping that our next mayor—be it Lori Lightfoot or Toni Preckwinkle—picks up on Tom Allen's suggestion.

It's time to fertilize all the gardens in town.

@joravben



At the Semillas de Justicia garden in Little Village, neighbors cultivate crops on a former industrial storage site. JORDAN CAMPBELL

NEWS

Seeding politics

Community gardens beautify urban space, but some also seek to transform urban society.

By **MAYA DUKMASOVA**

Near the border of North Lawndale and West Garfield Park a mountain range of wood chips piled more than five feet high stretches over 1,800 square feet of a once vacant lot. In a few weeks, a Bobcat will come through to level the chips as the lot continues its transformation into a community garden. Across the street another smaller lot is undergoing a similar metamorphosis, although it is in a more advanced state: Tree stumps mark the perimeter, some painted with red, black, and green designs; tires to be turned into flower beds are stacked neatly nearby; a dune of brown, turfy coconut husks waits to be spread across the land to improve the quality of the soil.

This gardening initiative is led by W.D. Floyd, founder of 360 Nation, a community organization that runs an after-school program in partnership with nearby Sumner

Elementary School to teach kids self-reliance, black political history, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) skills. In 2017 360 Nation began preparing one of the vacant lots, which had been overgrown by six-foot-high grass and littered with empty liquor bottles and syringes, for a garden. Last year, they expanded the work to the second lot, after the demolition of a half-built house that had loomed there for years.

“This was an environmental dumping ground,” says Floyd, 36, who’s also a PhD student at UIC. “The city’s trash was dumped over there . . . you had children coexisting next to piles of garbage.”

Twenty-five years ago, an illegal construction waste dump towered as high as a six-story building right across the street from Sumner. (The history and fallout from this dump and others like it in black residential neighborhoods on the west side was recently

chronicled in *USA Today’s The City* podcast.) Though that debris has been cleared, the EPA still classifies the land as a brownfield site. Floyd says that if the city and private owners can use local land to harm the community, it’s up to the community to take the land back and put it to good use.

Urban community gardens—where crops and/or flowers are cultivated for beautification and/or consumption—can seem quite similar no matter their social contexts. What really differentiates these gardens can come down to politics, manifested in things as overt as mission statements proclaimed by garden organizers and as subtle as the practices developed to keep green spaces free of pests and vandalism. Community gardens can represent long-term residents reclaiming abandoned and disinvested space or be a tool for newcomers to assert their presence in a community. But whether a community garden is developed by a well-funded nonprofit or a well-intentioned group of neighbors, the staying power of these projects depends on continued access to land—and land access is never not political.

“It’s our right to impose ourselves on that land and use that land so it benefits us,” Floyd says. “It made sense to turn [the lots] into a community garden because you don’t have any fresh food around here.”

Turning long-neglected spaces into productive land is a slow process. First, Floyd and his students and collaborators must prepare the

soil. Working on the assumption that the land is contaminated with heavy metals and will need remediation, the group is building the sites up with wood chips, cut grass, dry leaves, and other decomposing materials to create layers of nitrogen and carbon. This spring, they will test the land for toxic elements.

Last summer, 360 Nation’s summer day camp participants (kids aged 12 to 14) cultivated vegetables and greens in planters near Sumner. They gave the crops away to community members. As they scale up their gardening operation Floyd says they want to continue giving some food away for free, in addition to setting up a low-cost pantry and creating a sweat equity program whereby volunteers could trade a few hours of labor in the garden for bags of freshly picked food. All of this work, Floyd says, is part of 360 Nation’s larger political education efforts to “fill community voids,” both spatial and spiritual.

The Summer classroom that serves as 360 Nation’s base camp displays motivational posters made by the kids, and features images of the “four prophets of 360”: Harriet Tubman, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, and Ella Baker. Floyd models his work after the combination of social services and political education practiced by the Nation of Islam, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Black Panther Party. The point, he says, is to empower the community to improve the neighborhood without waiting for permission or asking for outside help.



360 Nation founder W.D. Floyd says community residents have a “right” to reclaim hazardous land for better use. MAYA DUKMASOVA

While 360 Nation promotes self-determination and doesn't want to advertise the locations of the gardens beyond the neighborhood, it's definitely not isolationist. Floyd says building relationships with CPS, long-term residents, local churches, and even 24th Ward alderman Michael Scott Jr. will make the work more resilient.

Both lots are currently in limbo, as the city is in the process of claiming them from foreclosed owners, county property records indicate. Floyd says destroying the gardens would be a political risk for city officials. "It becomes really difficult for an alderperson when they are against you cleaning up a lot to benefit the students and constituents," he says. "How can you say it's wrong to fix up a hazardous lot in the community?"

Yet gentrification pressures on local officials can be strong, and community gardening projects that aren't rooted in secure land access are more vulnerable to displacement.

Community gardens "can act as a signal to developers that this is a new hotspot," explains Winifred Curran, a professor of geography and sustainable urban development at DePaul University who's studied the way urban agriculture and other greening initiatives interface with gentrification. "Because greening has become a way that developers and real estate people try to add value to property, any sign of greening can be viewed as a sign of it being worthy of investment," she says. This can be especially true when neighbors have done the heavy lifting of remediating toxic soil and clearing other hazards at no cost to the property owners. "Often the very people who've done the work of community gardening end up being displaced."



Chicago Eco House's flower farm at Vernon Park Gardens in Woodlawn teaches kids sustainability and business skills.  COURTESY OF BEN ANDERSON

Many community gardeners are aware of these risks but launch themselves into gardening because the immediate benefits to their neighborhoods outweigh the risks of eventually losing their spaces. At Vernon Park Gardens in Woodlawn, for example, a block came together to plant crops, create a performance space, and host one of Chicago Eco House's flower farms that teaches kids business skills and sustainability. The gardens occupy private land with permission from the owner but are in close proximity to buildings owned by large real estate companies. For now, those companies have been supportive, donating supplies and providing water access. But, "in today's society most land owners or property owners' goal is making money," says Joi Hampton, one of the organizers of the garden. While she doesn't rule out the possibility of displacement one day down the line, she says "there'll always be an opportunity to pursue something like this in surrounding areas, we have several vacant lots."

Curran points out that community gardeners who don't have legal standing to be on the land they cultivate have had success protecting their gardens by "making the space very political," in the way Floyd described. If the garden is identified as a site that's important to the community's identity or as a site of resistance, "that becomes less attractive to developers because they know it'll be a site of conflict if they try to destroy the garden." But, she cautions, everything depends on the profit potential of the land. Informal agreements between landowners and gardeners can quickly turn sour when enough money's on the line.

About a half mile away from Vernon Park Gardens, in the Washington Park neighborhood, a longstanding community garden was destroyed just last summer. The block of the west side of King Drive between 55th Place and 56th Street has consisted of vacant lots and one graystone three-flat for over a decade. In 2011, the R.T.W. Veterans Center opened in the three-flat to provide free meals and social services for vets. The Veterans Center also began a garden on the vacant lot next door. In the summer of 2016, Assata's Daughters, a sort of radical girl scouts for black girls, took over stewardship of the space as the Veterans Center struggled to stay afloat. Assata's Daughters built out the garden as part of its environmental justice curriculum, securing access to the land with the help of the Healthy Food Hub, an organization that promotes healthy eating and works with the city to help gardeners cultivate vacant lots.



At Assata's Daughters' community garden youth grow food for Washington Park neighbors.

 COURTESY OF ASSATA'S DAUGHTERS

"It was a space where young people from the neighborhood were being seen as giving back," explains Assata's Daughters co-founder and community organizer Page May. "Usually they're looked down on and being blamed for everything." She adds that those who hung around the Veterans Center, including some who were homeless, kept an eye on the garden. The space became an intergenerational hub to provide fresh food to the community and was christened the Black Earth Youth Farm. But when May arrived on the site to begin planting in 2018 "it was all mowed over," she says.

Because the soil on the site wasn't safe to plant in directly, over the years graders had laid down layer upon layer of wood chips on the lot, and then added healthy soil on top. "The mower scattered the soil everywhere, off onto the sidewalk and past the edges of the sidewalk. The rows were gone, there wasn't enough soil to make new ones," May recalls. "We didn't have the time or resources to rebuild."

Looking back, she says, it seems like the powers that be no longer saw the garden as an asset; it's demise "was tied to U of C land grabs." In May 2018, the city land trust had sold one of the lots under the garden to a shell company controlled by the University of Chicago, which now owns three of the four parcels of land that made up the garden. Twentieth Ward Alderman Willie Cochran (who'd supported the garden before, according to May) admitted on Facebook that the city had mowed the site, adding: "Please don't start a garden at that location the land will be sold and developed soon." The Veterans Center

building, which had been sold to a new owner the previous year, was now being rehabbed into an upscale rental property where three bedroom units are listed for \$2,100 and the landlord requires lessees to have household income three times the rent.

Assata's Daughters didn't give up on community gardening, though. They moved the entire gardening program to a second site in Washington Park. The owner of that lot, a longtime community resident, gave them permission to use the site after she saw them cleaning up vacant lots in the neighborhood. They've pitched more than 20 beds and brought in beehives. In addition to giving the harvest to the locals, they've also invited interested neighbors to cultivate their own plots. This summer, May says, they'll be paying about a dozen youth \$15/hour to work in the garden, too. "That's an opportunity for them to engage in developing a resource for the community as part of a larger goal of radically changing social dynamics," she adds.

This time, Assata's Daughters is keeping the location secret, not only to protect themselves from displacement but also to make sure the garden remains a resource for its neighbors first.

Assata's Daughters, May explains, is trying to model what a black feminist, abolitionist neighborhood organization can look like—how conflicts can be de-escalated and resolved without police, how abandoned space can be revived even when there aren't many resources around, how youth can be movement leaders and not just passive recipients of charity services. "Black feminism understands ➔

NEWS & POLITICS

continued from 9

that the world is the way that it is because of politics,” she says. “We have to love and support each other and not depend on the state or depend on City Council to give us what we need.”

A similar spirit animates the Semillas de Justicia (Seeds of Justice) community garden in Little Village. Latinx neighbors and the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization have worked for years to turn a 1.5-acre industrial site where underground oil tankers were once stored into green space. This summer will be the seventh season that dozens of locals cultivate fruits, vegetables, and herbs to feed their families and continue the foodways of their ancestral countries.

Vivi Moreno, a food justice organizer with LVEJO who also helps with the garden, remembers taking a soil-biology workshop with a well-known white farmer who said she liked to farm because “plants aren’t political.” Moreno says that is just not true. “There are so many food apartheid zones in Chicago, that don’t have access to fresh organic produce, so

many folks don’t have access to their cultural food,” she continues. “When a community doesn’t have access to its cultural food that’s cultural genocide.”

The lot, which has required extensive remediation, is owned by Neighbor Space, a non-profit land trust that acquires and preserves space for community gardens. Contaminated soil was excavated as far down as eight feet and replaced with gravel; compost and new soil were layered on top and the garden has a mix of ground-level and elevated beds.

Master gardener Fermin Meza helps tend the site, but Moreno says that families are free to use beds to grow things however they wish. “They’re showing us what is culturally relevant here and it’s showing what community control looks like,” she says. Neighbor Space takes care of the water bills and LVEJO provides soil, tools, and organic seeds. They ask for donations if families can spare them. Every week in the summer the garden hosts community dinners, when families volunteer to use crops from the garden to cook meals for 40 to 50 people.

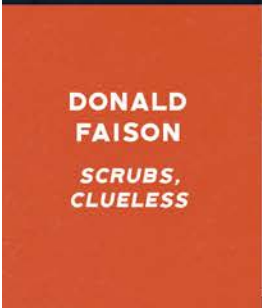
“It’s a garden run 100 percent by people of color, 100 percent operated by immigrants,” says Moreno. Like Floyd and May, she underscores the importance of the project being led by the people it serves. She’s also careful about drawing attention to its location. “We’ve had random white folks come in open hours and start taking pictures of the gardeners. Especially when they’re brown, indigenous, it feels a little bit like we’re in a zoo.”

Moreno says that as Latinx immigrants in Chicago face gentrification pressures, immigration raids, deportations, healthcare access difficulty, low wage work, and a variety of other challenges, Semillas de Justicia is space where community members can freely assert their cultural identities and organize. “The fact that we are here finding joy, and devoting ourselves to land care when all of these other things are happening in our lives—that’s an embodiment of justice.”

 @mdoukmas
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Little Village Environmental Justice Organization's garden begins its seventh season this spring.  JORDAN CAMPBELL

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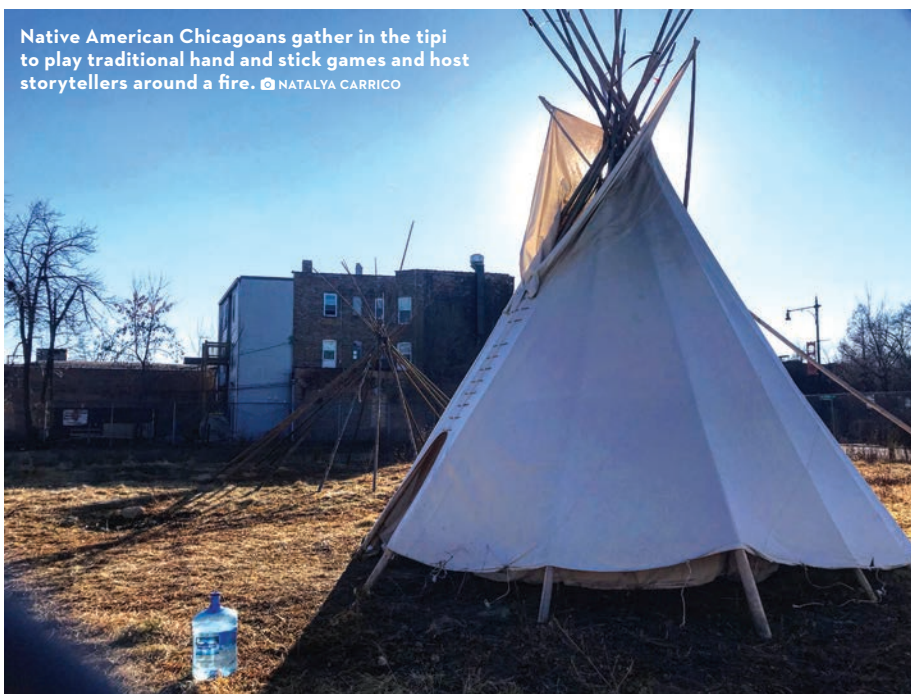
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NEWS

“We’re still here”

The First Nations Garden in Albany Park aims to heal the community and the environment.

By NATALYA CARRICO



Native American Chicagoans gather in the tipi to play traditional hand and stick games and host storytellers around a fire. © NATALYA CARRICO

In a formerly vacant lot in Albany Park at the intersection of Pulaski Road and Wilson Avenue stand two tipis—one perhaps 20 feet tall, the other half that height—surrounded by dry, yellowed grass rising up from the cold earth. Across the street to the north is a Citgo gas station, and to the west is the large parking lot of the 17th District Chicago Police Department. The Chi-Nations Youth Council, a grassroots organization that champions environmental and social justice while creating safe spaces for Native American youth, and the American Indian Center, the oldest urban Native American cultural center in the nation, have leased the lot together with the intention of growing a garden.

The First Nations Garden will be a space for powwows, environmental education, and traditional ceremonies—and a chance for Chicago’s land and water ecosystems to heal.

“It creates a healing space outside of the chaos of the metropolis that’s known as Chicago today,” said Adrien Pochel, 17, the interim co-president of Chi-Nations.

Nineteen-year-old Naomi Harvey-Turner, Chi-Nations’ Sergeant at Arms, said the First Nations Garden gives her a sense of belonging. “It’s not that often that you could practice so many of your traditions and be in that position of your ancestors inside a tipi, and smack-dab in the middle of Chicago,” she said. Since November, Native American Chicagoans have gathered in the larger tipi to socialize, play

traditional hand and stick games, and host storytellers around a fire.

Chi-Nations was established in 2012 by Native American youth who rejected the conservative leadership of the AIC. Since then, the groups reconciled and leased the lot in November 2018 with the approval of Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa and the City Council.

Adam Sings In The Timber, a Chicago-based photojournalist, assisted Chi-Nations members with setting up the larger of the two tipis. Sings In The Timber, a member of the Crow tribe, said the tipi “announces to [non-Native Americans] that we’re still here. I know that there are a lot of people out there that think that we no longer exist. They see us as a vanished race, a race that just isn’t around anymore.”

The Chicagoland area is now home to over 50,000 Native Americans from over 140 tribes, according to the AIC. The name Chicago originates from the Miami-Illinois word *Shikaakwa* (referring to the smell of the plentiful wild onions in the area) and the Algonquin word *Zhigaagong*. The city was a hub for travel, trade, and hunting long before Europeans arrived on the continent. Before the 1830s, the Potawatomi were the primary inhabitants of the area, so Chi-Nations intends to install a wigwam—a traditional dome-shaped dwelling—in the garden, an acknowledgment of the Potawatomi’s ancestral homelands and contributions to Chicago as we know it. While the city’s location is ideal for sustaining plant, animal, and human

life, it has not escaped the effects of climate change.

The Chicago Climate Action Plan (CCAP), a city initiative adopted in 2008, says the city’s native ecosystems are in danger of being irreversibly damaged by rising temperatures. Since 1980, temperatures have increased by 2.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Winters have warmed by 4 degrees. Chicago’s plant hardiness zone, which indicates the lowest average annual temperature that plants can survive, has already shifted to resemble that of central Illinois in the 1990s—think more sweetgum trees and less maple and birch. According to the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, Chicago is its own island of trapped heat. The rest of Illinois, until as far south as Springfield, is on average 10-15 degrees colder.

For the past decade, the city has been working to combat these potentially devastating changes. A 2007 Chicago Climate Task Force report suggested that Chicago reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 to reach an 80 percent reduction by 2050. Transforming vacant lots into green spaces aids this goal. More green space in the city helps clean the air and manage both floodwaters and heatwaves.

“When we think about climate change, the plants are gonna move and they’re gonna do what they have to do in order to survive here,” said Fawn Pochel, the AIC’s education coordinator (and Adrien Pochel’s aunt). “We’re gonna get with the system or we’re not. We’re

gonna be the ones to fall off well before the plants.”

Fawn, who is First Nations Oji-Cree, said her understanding of indigenous plants and medicines was passed down to her through generations of family members and is essential to her Anishinaabe culture.

“For a lot of nations’ origin stories, people were the last to be placed here on Turtle Island,” Fawn said, referring to North America with the name used by the Ojibwe and many other nations. “A lot of these plants are our relatives, so we grow up learning about them and how they help us as humans navigate through this world. They’re not something that can be dominated. There’s something that needs to be respected about them and the access that they give us to surviving here.”

For now, the garden space is undeveloped, but Fawn said there are plans to open it to the public on April 13 for a powwow honoring the youth. The process for restoration at the First Nations Garden involves testing the soil and determining the plants that will best detoxify the land. Sunflowers, which have long been a staple crop for many Native American groups, are expected to be featured in the garden. These bright beauties actually break down and eliminate metals and other contaminants from the soil. Even while detoxifying a site, sunflowers can produce seeds that remain safe for animals and humans to consume.

Other likely candidates to be planted are echinacea and bergamot, flowers native to the prairies with deep root systems that clean the soil. Also being considered are a giant, ancient breed of squash called Gete-okosomin; strawberries, which are sacred in many Native American cultures; and the four Anishinaabe medicines: cedar, sage, sweetgrass, and tobacco.

“Aesthetic-wise, sure, these plants are beautiful, they have blooms, but also they serve purposes that go beyond what we see,” said Fawn. “They keep the soil healthy. Their technologies are not just for us for building and medicinal purposes, but for our animal and insect relatives as well.”

“In Chicago, as Native people, we always feel alone,” said Adrien Pochel. “By learning our plant relatives, it gives us a chance to not be alone in this city. It gives us a chance to be able to connect with something that is in our DNA, which is in our memories.”

[@NatCarrico](#)

FOOD FEATURE

Rodrick Markus wants to be your green tea pusher

Rare Tea Cellar positions itself to supply chefs with all their culinary cannabis needs.

By **MIKE SULA**



Frequent visitors to Rodrick Markus's lair expect to encounter powerful aromas such as truffle, strawberry, or barrel-aged tea. No one expects it to smell like weed. But that was the unmistakable perfume I inhaled one recent afternoon as we sat at the table in his twilight warehouse-tasting-room/laboratory at Rare Tea Cellar in Ravenswood. Between us he'd lined up a half dozen glass bowls, each filled with a different premium tea blend—except for the one containing a pile of fat, green Oregon- and Vegas-grown Honolulu Haze nugs.

Those aren't to be confused with Hawaiian Haze, a cannabis strain with markedly high levels of THC that elicits a euphoric, energetic high. Honolulu Haze won't do that for you. It's a hemp strain (and nail polish color, coincidentally) that contains virtually no THC, but does produce noticeable effects, thanks to high levels of cannabidiol, which by now you should know as CBD, the nonpsychoactive cannabinoid marketed in everything from gummies to dog treats to sex lube.

"There's so much garbage on the market," says Markus, who's been supplying chefs with rare and weird ingredients from his steadily expanding apothecary for 22 years. Hundreds of these ingredients line the shelves in labeled glass jars—dried black limes, Okinawa sugar,

30-year-old balsamic vinegar crystals—a sensory overload that threatens to short-circuit the ability to focus on anything.

Luckily Markus was making tea, an ordinarily calming beverage, which in this case had the extra benefit of the antianxiety properties (among others) for which CBD has been embraced. First there was a black blend scented with rose and lychee fruit, and infused with 10 milligrams of CBD extract. Then came a five-year-old oak-aged pu-erh with cacao nibs and vanilla that Markus normally sells for \$200 a pound (but with 20 milligrams of CBD will likely command \$500, or \$6 a serving, once he starts selling it). And then there was the moonlight jasmine blossom, a performance tea, a tight ball of neatly tied leaves that dramatically blooms in the glass as it steeps and releases 10 milligrams of CBD.

Over the last four years or so Markus has developed about 17 different CBD and hemp-infused products—not just teas, but syrups and shrubs—that he'd like to unleash his demanding customers on. "I've never had more people reach out in my life," he says. And yet, though chefs and bartenders all over the country are increasingly experimenting with CBD (and cannabis in general), he's holding back. He's avoiding a perceived legal gray area that persists even after the 2018 farm bill essentially legalized CBD products as long as

Clockwise from top: the Fresh Green; Moonlight Jasmine Blossom; Litchi Noir Iced Tea

© SANDY NOTO





Rodrick Markus
SANDY NOTO

Search the Reader's online database of thousands of Chicago-area restaurants—and add your own review—at chicagoreader.com/food.



they are derived from hemp (which contains less than 0.3 percent THC), and not marijuana (what all your friends in California, Colorado, and eight other states are enjoying without holding a medical license or breaking the law).

Even as local restaurants such as Young American and the Swill Inn are spiking dishes and drinks with CBD, the FDA still isn't on board with its use as a dietary or health supplement. Markus thinks this puts restaurants and bars at risk, particularly in Illinois, where it's still a novelty relative to states where cannabis is legal.

But what could go wrong? After all, "people don't turn to jerks with it," he says. "As opposed to booze."

Markus has teas that have been misted with water-soluble CBD extract, which absorbs the cannabinoid as the liquid evaporates. He's also been blending premium teas with hemp flower, like the vegetal Kyoto kukicha green tea, which doesn't contribute much medicinal effect but tastes interesting enough in combination with the hemp's natural terpenes, the essential oils responsible for the distinctive flavors and aromas that differentiate strains of cannabis.

He's added CBD to some of his greatest hits such as a thick, molasses-like cold-pressed infused agave syrup, strong enough to stand up to coffee, tea, or on pancakes or ice cream, and the Cosa Nostra shrub that brings together a green tea blend with 20-year-old white vinegar and almond oil. A shrub made from oolong tea, magnolia blossoms, cane sugar, and vinegar somehow tastes like the pot likker from a batch of braised collard greens.

Chefs are often the first to introduce ingredients to the general culinary lexicon. That doesn't seem to be true when it comes to CBD. "Everyone's taking really pedestrian ingredients right now and trying to make something inexpensive and make a lot of money on it," says Markus. "I think if you put the really good stuff behind it people are gonna be really into it. If you start with something great it's gonna taste great." He's particularly excited to infuse some imported French cultured butter he has coming in.

In lieu of putting his supply on the market now, Markus has been doling out samples to chefs here and there. At Finom Coffee Rafael

Esparza made a CBD sugar infusion from hemp flower Markus gave him, then added it to glucose syrup to form a glassy topper to a crème brûlée latte. "It was killer," he told me in a text. "Nice body feel. Not high or anything."

On the other hand, chefs are on the leading edge when it comes to cooking with marijuana, not just trying to get people high, but playing with different extracts, isolates, terpenes, and concentrates derived from the plant. Markus, who stands at the ready for when recreational marijuana is legalized, compares the current culinary cannabis environment to the turn of the century's prevailing culinary trend.

"Molecular gastronomy needed certain chemicals to perform the magic," he says. "It's gonna be the same with this. It's a wild world right now, but it's gonna be super interesting as it unfolds. We're ready on every front to touch every aspect of it. The applications are just endless. It's gonna create some crazy derivatives that I can't wait to be a part of."

@MikeSula



5TH ANNUAL UPPERS & DOWNERS

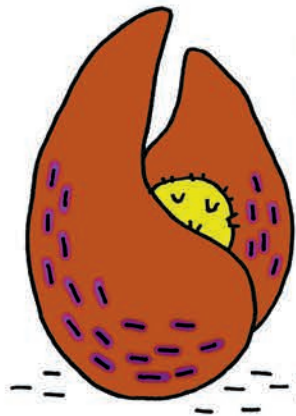
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A PRAIRIE POTHOLE GUIDE TO SPRING WILDFLOWERS of NORTHERN ILLINOIS WOODLANDS ♡



SKUNK CABBAGE

(*Symplocarpus foetidus*)

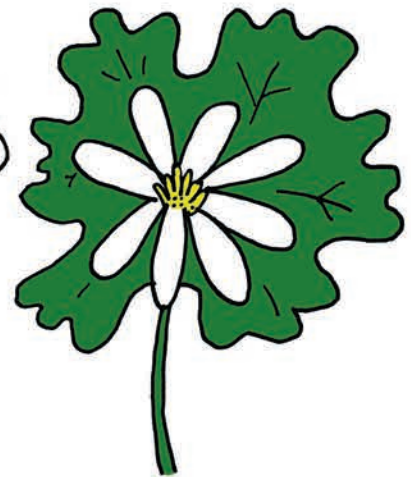
Our earliest Spring plant, its growth generates enough heat to melt overlying snow. The weird spathe hides a weirder yellow spadix covered in small flowers. Later in the year, enormous cabbage-like leaves emerge.

It's called Skunk Cabbage, cuz if you accidentally step on it, it emits a skunk-like odor. If you intentionally step on it, well, you're just a dick.

BLOODROOT

(*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

This delightful plant features a single, leathery leaf that uncurls to reveal a lone, white-petaled flower on a stalk. The roots, when damaged, release a poisonous red sap — So don't go messing around with them.



DUTCHMAN'S BREECHES

(*Dicentra cucullaria*)

Delicate, fern-like leaves support a stalk, upon which several odd, pants-shaped white flowers dangle, as if on a laundry line. Don't go getting your funk on with this one, either — both the roots and above-ground parts contain toxic alkaloids.





WILD GINGER

(*Asarum canadense*)

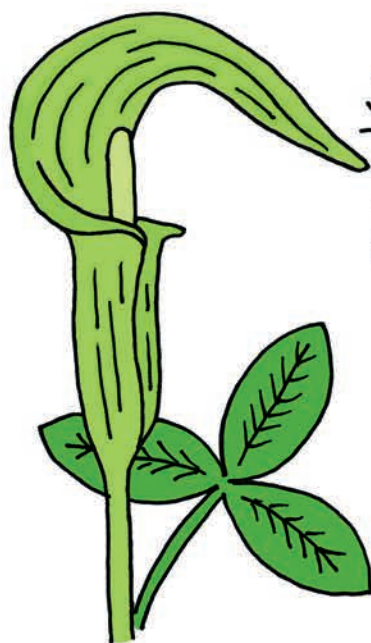
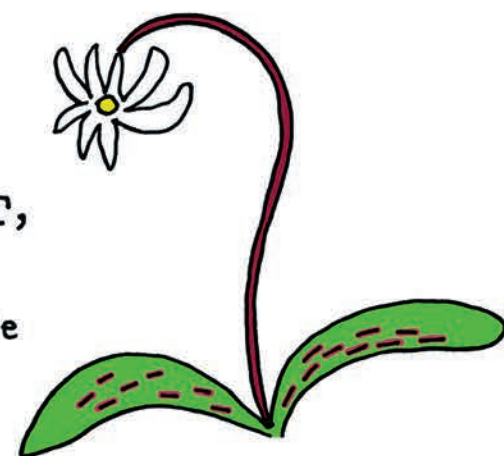
Found growing in colonies, Wild Ginger hugs low to the ground, with velvety, heart-shaped leaves. In April and May, rusty-brown, cup-like flowers appear, usually hidden beneath the fuzzy leaves... Go ahead and take a peek — this one is safe! In fact, the Rhizomes were boiled with sugar by pioneers and Native Americans, to make a spicy confection.

ADDER'S TONGUE

(*Erythronium albidum*)

AKA: DOGTOOTH VIOLET,
TROUT LILY

In mature plants, a pair of beautiful, mottled, lanceolate leaves support a slender stalk, upon which a drooping white flower hangs, with petals and sepals curling down and then up around long yellow stamens. Cute!



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

(*Arisaema triphyllum*)

This unique plant has one or two stalky leaves, each ending in three leaflets, and an amazing spathe, which enfolds and hangs over the flower-bearing spadix. In the early fall, the fruit — a bright cluster of red berries — stands out clearly among the autumn decay. Cool!

John Porcellino
MARCH 2019



Buehler Enabling Garden at the Chicago Botanic Garden  CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

The healing garden

Need some stress relief? Go get your hands dirty.

By JULIA THIEL

At first glance the Buehler Enabling Garden just looks like another plot in the Chicago Botanic Garden, with brick-paved walkways, hanging planters, and raised beds filled with flowers. A closer look, though, reveals that the paths are flat and wide to accommodate people in wheelchairs, the hanging baskets are on pulleys that allow their heights to be adjusted, and the flowerbeds are at various elevations so that gardeners can work on them from a seated or standing position. A section of lawn is raised so that people who have difficulty getting up from the ground can sit on the grass, and in another area a garden is planted in a metal grid, allowing visually impaired people to count the squares and identify which plants they're working with.

Anyone who visits the Botanic Garden can wander through the Enabling Garden, but its main purpose is to serve people who can benefit from horticultural therapy. Enabling Garden coordinator and registered horticultural therapist Alicia Green says, essentially, that means “the use of professionally directed plant and gardening activities to help restore physical and mental health. What makes it therapeutic revolves around the concept of stress relief.

Interacting with live plants—there's general research that suggests it lowers your stress.”

According to the website of the American Horticultural Therapy Association, in the early 19th century physician Benjamin Rush, often referred to as “the father of American psychiatry,” first documented the positive effect gardening had on people with mental illnesses, and in the 1940s and 50s hospitalized war veterans were treated using horticultural therapy. Expanding the practice from the mentally ill to veterans helped it to become more widely accepted, and today horticultural therapy is used, says the association's website, “within a broad range of rehabilitative, vocational, and community settings.”

Many scientific studies have documented that exposure to nature is associated with a wide range of health benefits, including lower stress levels, and lower risks of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and premature births. It has even been found to be associated with a lower mortality rate. A seminal study published in 1984 by environmental psychologist Roger Ulrich showed that patients recovering from gallbladder surgery healed faster, needed less pain medication, and had fewer complications when they had windows with a view of trees

rather than a brick wall. Subsequent studies have indicated that even looking at pictures of soothing scenes can be beneficial—but according to Green, there's not much research on horticultural therapy. “A lot of what's missing is the connection of the person there facilitating the activities [the horticultural therapist],” she says. “There's a growing body of research that being in nature is therapeutic.”

In fact, she says, technically what her department does is considered therapeutic horticulture. “If you're doing horticultural therapy, you'd be working with professionals, charting progress [of patients]. We are not privy to people's charts or medical information. We're supplementing their care but we're not part of the treatment plan.” Her department does, however, have off-site programs at Shriners Hospital for Children and the Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital, along with some assisted living facilities, where Botanic Garden staff members work with patients to build and maintain gardens, often using herbs, flowers, and other plants chosen because they stimulate the senses.

Green does the same thing in the Enabling Garden. “Every year I focus on color, on plants that have a tactile quality or a scent,” she says. “I really focus on plants that attract butterflies, hummingbirds, things that might make it

interesting for people engaging in the garden. In the summer I have a favorite, scented geranium. It's got a really nice velvety, fuzzy leaf. It doesn't really flower, but when you rub the leaf it smells like mint.”

She also considers how she'll use the plants in the garden's classes. “In the spring I use a lot of fragrant plants—tulips, stock, violas, pansies. You can harvest and press them. A lot of what horticultural therapists do is use the products of the garden in their programming.” For example, pansies can be made into pressed flower bookmarks, cut flowers can be used for flower arranging workshops, and herbs are useful for cooking projects. The programming she does depends on who she's working with, Green says. “The groups I get tend to be kids with a lot of special needs. The garden is set up for that; it's a comfortable place for them to come if they have wheelchairs. Sometimes kids come with severe and profound disabilities, so they need a lot of sensory interaction.”

The Chicago Botanic Garden has one of the oldest and most comprehensive programs in the U.S.—the Buehler Enabling Garden opened in 1999, and the garden's horticultural therapy program and first Enabling Garden launched 22 years before that. The garden now offers a horticultural therapy certificate program through the adult education department and in conjunction with Oakton Community College, where the participants get college credit. The 12-credit class is mostly online, Green says, but the students come to the Botanic Garden for a week of intensive programming and visit other therapeutic gardens in the area. There aren't many, though. Green says that Rush University Medical Center is putting in a healing garden, and Growing Solutions Farm in the Illinois Medical District teaches urban agriculture to young adults with autism, but she doesn't know of much else.

The Botanic Garden is often involved in consultations when hospitals and other facilities are planning therapeutic gardens, Green says, but “when the budget gets cut it's the first thing to go.” Even other botanic gardens with horticulture therapy programs don't always have their own department or a dedicated therapeutic garden. Maybe that's because of the lack of formal research around the topic—but while she's not formally evaluating the people who participate in the programs she directs, Green says the effect is noticeable. “Before and after, I can see the positive change in people's mood as they're outside, playing with plants.” 

 @juliathiel

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⚡ SELLING ⚡
THESE TWO
ZZ PLANTS
AKA
ZAMIOCULCAS
ZAMIIFOLIA
AKA ZANZIBAR
GEM AKA ZZ COOL J
AKA THE MOST
INDESTRUCTIBLE
PLANT OF ALL
TIME. DM OR
COMMENT
TO CLAIM.
K. BYE.

RYAN EDMUND

Wanna buy a plant?

This Brighton Park prodigy has the goods. And the microgreens . . .

Story and Photos BY RYAN EDMUND



Above: Damiane Nickles studies a small aloe plant in his living room.

Left: A teacup holds a small psychopsis mendenhall.

Damiane Nickles is a young south-sider who has designed his life around something he's passionate about: plants.

He sells cute curated houseplants in scrumptious little pots or upcycled vessels through his Instagram account, @notaplantshop. His captions are eccentric, loud, and silly: "SELLING—THESE TWO ZZ PLANTS AKA ZAMIOCULCAS ZAMIIFOLIA AKA ZANZIBAR GEM AKA ZZ COOL J AKA THE MOST INDESTRUCTIBLE PLANT OF ALL TIME. DM OR COMMENT TO CLAIM. K. BYE." He photographs in his living room, which is styled with a variety of midcentury modern furniture, art, and tchotchkes.

Before creating @notaplantshop last fall, Nickles had a table at Plant Chicago's farmers' market. He knocked over his plants, broke some pots, and knew this sales model wasn't right for him. Instagram felt more natural and resonated with his audience. After he posts a new photo, followers comment or DM him to claim the plant (they generally cost between \$10 and \$50), and then pick it up from his apartment in Brighton Park. "I have them grab the plant from its current spot in my apartment to establish that special bond," he said, describing the process of making a sale. (He also has houseplants available for sale at Sol Cafe in Rogers Park.) ➔



Closed Loop Farm employees (from left to right): Adam Pollack (owner), Aniki Coates, and Riley Finnegan.

continued from 19

Nickles’s parents immigrated to Brooklyn from Trinidad in 1985, and his father planted a hibiscus garden in their backyard as a little piece of home for him and his wife. “Some of my best memories of plants come from seeing my dad hosing down the backyard with dozens of six-foot-tall hibiscus plants,” he says. “He used to talk to them and show them so much love.”

Nickles went to college in New York for painting and later switched to graphic design. Feeling stagnant in his work in corporate branding, he moved to Chicago and began working at Found and the Barn, Evanston restaurants known for their commitment to local sourcing. Found received its microgreens from Closed Loop Farms, located in the sustainably minded compound the Plant, in Back of the Yards. Intrigued, Nickles found his way to working there.

Closed Loop Farms is a sustainable food incubator that also houses businesses such as Whiner Beer and Four Letter Word Coffee. The basement farm has a fresh, earthy scent, and the tropical humidity of the room is a nice reprieve from Chicago’s winter. The room glows with a purple hue from the grow lights. Garlic chives and Genovese basil rest along rows of shelves, some of the 32 varieties of microgreens on the farm. Employees harvest the microgreens twice a week, trimming at stations from five to ten every morning, when deliveries begin to go out. Closed Loop Farms currently provides for 85 restaurants, including Girl and the Goat and Sunda, and also sells edible flowers in late spring through the fall.

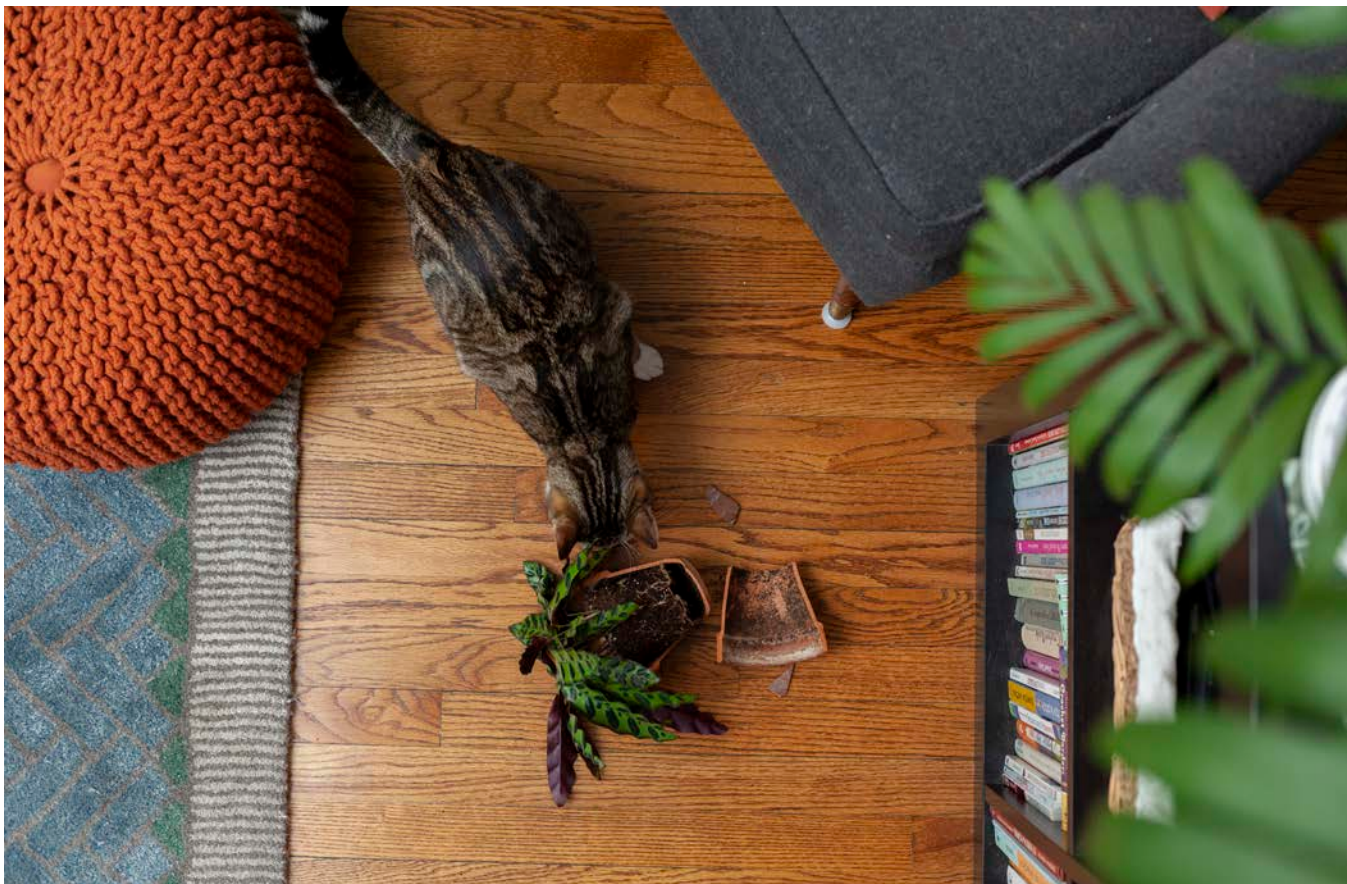
Nickles’s passion for plants goes hand-in-hand with his desire to educate others. His plans for @notaplantshop? He wants to make people happy, spread knowledge, and aim for a higher output when the warm weather arrives. 🌱



Above: Damiane carrying micogreens to be harvested



Composting the microgreens after harvesting; knife used for harvesting



Gayle Force Winds and a fallen rattlesnake plant

Houseplant fails

For every plantshelfie on Instagram and beautifully styled “it plant” of the moment (pink princess, anyone?), there exist several pet-chewed, brown-fried-leaf, dying-dead failures.

Story and photos BY SARAH BECKETT

Every plant owner has lost a plant or two or 20. I have a second bathroom shower I deem “the plant graveyard” where empty pots and dead plants wait out the remainder of the winter. Come with me as I root through five houseplant fails.

Pets

I made a cat-safe houseplant collection so my two cats, Sweet Dee and Gayle Force Winds, could have their own plants to do with as they may. One of the first plants I thought to put in this collection was the classic spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*). I was not prepared for the absolute carnage my cats would wreak on this poor unsuspecting plant. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals lists the spider plant as nontoxic to cats and dogs, but cats love this plant so much because it has a chemical compound somewhat related to opium and can have a mild

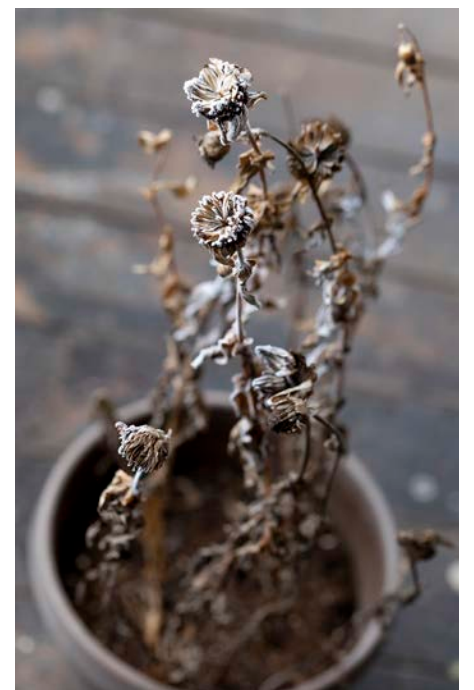
hallucinogenic effect when leaves are ingested. Much like when ingesting catnip, the girls became zooming monsters sprinting from one end of our home to the other, batting at the air and chasing their tails. (It took at least an hour for Dee and Gayle to come down from their cat highs.) Here’s how to keep your plants safe from pet destruction: playtime, bitter sprays, clicker training (yes, this works for cats), top dressing like rocks and pebbles, or covering with tin foil in a pinch. Punishment doesn’t work—especially with cats because they will laugh in your face.



Sweet Dee snacks on a spider plant.

Sunburn (and freezing)

Did you know plants can get sunburn? I learned that lesson the hard way. Houseplant owners love to bring their plants outside for the summer and while some plants are able to thrive, the practice can also lead to heartbreak. I have a giant agave I got as a gift. This guy is big, like really big, maybe two and a half feet tall by two feet wide. Not wanting my newly acquired giant beauty to suffer from lack of sun, I brought the plant outside for the summer. After only an hour basking in the sun, it was completely wilted and even burned in some spots. Turns out, plants can experience a form of heat stroke. Now when I want to move houseplants outside, I start by placing the plant in the shade for an hour or two a day for about a week and slowly bring them into more direct sun. It is possible to also accidentally freeze your plants, so keep an eye on your windowsill friends in the winter. ➔



Cat-safe zinnias



An indoor herb garden—some plants survived.



Sweet Dee eyes a sedeveria blue giant succulent next to a Chinese money plant.

Light

Oh, the succulent. Succulents were once the go-to plant everyone raved about. While I'll agree they are easily propagated, many of mine could not survive in the lighting conditions of my home. It wasn't long till those beauties stretched out and elongated, desperately reaching for the sun. Succulents are not the only houseplants to express dismay with where you've placed them. If you see your once compact plant reaching for the sun with large gaps between new leaves, that means they are in need of more light. Try moving them to a new home—even if that means providing an artificial light source.

Water

I have killed so many plants by overloving them and watering too often. First, understand watering basics: yellowing and brown leaves, with leaf drop, are a good indication of overwatering; crispy brown leaves can indicate underwatering and humidity issues. Make sure you are not waiting too long to water a plant and that its soil is absorbing water properly. Adding a humidity tray or putting plants near each other can help raise humidity levels. I'm lucky enough to have a window in my bathroom where a lot of my humidity loving friends live. The best way to know if it's time to water a plant is to touch the soil and see if it is wet or dry. If your plants need water, give them a good drink—I have a lot of plants and will often put them in the shower and spray them all down at once to make watering easier. Make sure you use a pot with drainage or you risk root rot. Once root rot sets in, the plant is a goner—just ask every Begonia rex I've ever owned. 📷

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Pests

A friend of mine once shared a plant-specific urban legend in which a young couple returns from a trip to the desert with a cactus they dug up. After a few weeks of enjoying this new “houseplant,” thousands of baby spiders emerged from the cactus. The Internet confirmed my suspicions: this urban legend was easily debunked. (Cacti are not easily moved—also, leave nature alone!) While you most likely won't find a host of spiders in any locally bought houseplants, you may come across one of these crawly enemies: spider mites, scale, mealybugs, and of course those dang fungus gnats. There are a lot of ways to combat these pests. I like environmentally and pet-safe options (once I released 500 ladybugs on my screen porch). I currently use a hot pepper spray for most bug issues. I have also been known to use diatomaceous earth and a simple mixture of rubbing alcohol and dish soap.



Nerve plants

🐦 @sarahjulie

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Dutch Masters

© JOEL MAISONNET

THEATER

An endless detour

Dutch Masters takes way too long to get to the point.

By JUSTIN HAYFORD

In his 2018 one-act, actor and writer Greg Keller creates a relationship between two young men so poignant, agonizing, and fundamental that it's difficult to believe no other playwright (at least to my knowledge) has explored this terrain before. Describing the true nature of their pathologically intertwined past, about which only one is aware until late in the play, would spoil nearly everything in these intermittently riveting 75 minutes—largely because Keller unwisely turns what might be the play's animating event into the eleventh hour big reveal.

Eric and Steve meet in New York City in 1992 on a deserted D train headed uptown. Eric, who's black, is peculiarly intent on engaging Steve, who's white, in conversation. By turns charming, inscrutable, and menacing, Eric spends a long opening scene alternately cajoling and taunting Steve, who's determined not to appear rude or rattled, with aimless chatter as though setting him up for, well, god knows what. Given the play's title, Keller's likely channeling Amiri Baraka's 1964 two-hander *Dutchman*, in which a white woman, every bit as alluring and unpredictable as Eric, accosts and seduces a black man on a New York subway train with tragic results.

Had Keller left his characters on the train, his play might not have gone off the rails quite so quickly. Instead, Steve agrees to get off the train with Eric somewhere in the South

Bronx—after Eric's told him he robs people and blocked him from exiting at his own stop. Eric's pledge to score some weed for the pair adds little credulity. Why Steve would then agree to go to Eric's apartment is a mystery even the strong spliff they share can't explain.

Once they arrive, though, the play gets back on track when Eric finally reveals Steve is no stranger to him. When they were both children, Eric routinely spent time in Steve's house, even played with his toys, although Steve could never have known. Eric is in essence Steve's shadow, and the intersection of

DUTCH MASTERS

Through 4/6: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 and 8 PM, Broadway Armory Park, 5917 N. Broadway, jackalopetheatre.org, \$30, \$20 students and seniors.

their histories invokes profoundly discomfiting issues about race and class that Keller expertly personalizes in the men's attempt to make sense of their not-quite-shared lives.

In this Jackalope premiere, director Wardell Julius Clark brings this final section of *Dutch Masters* thrillingly to life, thanks in large part to Patrick Agada's mesmerizing, at times unbearable performance as Eric. Agada navigates an emotional minefield as Eric cycles through spite, regret, betrayal, helplessness, and soul-splitting rage. As Steve, Sam Boeck is mostly stuck flinching in fear and bewilderment, which is about all the script gives him to do.

Once the complications of their shared past come to light—and their devastating effect on Eric—the final 15 minutes are indelible. One wonders why Keller didn't start the play much later and devote all 75 minutes to the stuff that matters. **A**



© MANDAVE SAINI

THEATER

Mission to Mars

Four aspiring interplanetary colonizers learn how to live on Earth.

Chimera Ensemble presents the Chicago premiere of MJ Kaufman's 2014 drama. Four very different people decide it's their life's mission to be sent to Mars for the rest of their days in order to make it habitable for humanity. But in the final countdown before the "winning" candidates are chosen, each questions why they want to go and what it means to leave everything literally 142 million miles away.

One way or another, all four would-be space explorers want to be part of the mission in order to lend meaning to their lives. Omar (Arif Yampolsky) is a programmer striving to do something important, totally ignoring his partner who desperately wants him to stay. Aggie (Hannah Larson) is a directionless young woman who wants to prove to her family that she can amount to something. Eleanor (Katlynn Yost), a librarian stifled by her job and loveless life, thinks her skills would be put to better use on another planet. Bill (Brian Sheridan, in a standout performance) is an insufferable overachiever convinced of his qualifications and lacking any doubts whatsoever until it's too late.

In short vignettes, each candidate is seen with his or her loved ones as they prepare to leave. These scenes are funny and poignant in equal measure because these are perhaps the last times these people will ever see one another. You don't have to go to outer space to make your life mean something, the play seems to say, but the threat of such a trip sharpens one's idea of what truly matters. Gwendolyn Wiegold directed. **—DMITRY SAMAROV** *HOW TO LIVE ON EARTH* Through 3/24: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Collaboration Studios, 1579 N. Milwaukee, chimeraensemble.com, \$23, \$16 students, seniors, and industry.

Feed me, Seymour!

Little Shop of Horrors has not grown gracefully into the new millennium.

In *Little Shop of Horrors*, most of New York's skid row residents are just trying to survive. They dream of moving to the 'burbs, owning a home, and finding love—elements of life that are less prioritized among members of a generation who are living with debilitating debt and wearing themselves out on side-hustles. The current Mercury Theater production, under the direction of L. Walter Stearns, hits the classic notes of rock, horror, and comedy—but in the age of movements like #MeToo, some of the plot elements feel a little off.

Seymour (Chris Kale Jones) is a poverty-stricken young man struggling to get his life together. An orphan, he was taken in as a small child by the greedy Mr. Mushnik (Tommy Novak), who runs a failing flower shop. It's the first among many relationships in the play that have unfortunate, sometimes killer power dynamics. Seymour

works in Mr. Mushnik's shop alongside his love interest Audrey (Dana Tretta), who is stuck in a nonconsensual masochistic relationship with her boyfriend Orin—Dr. Orin (David Sajewich). With the entrance of an exotic plant of questionable provenance, everything changes.

Among the best elements of this production are Serena Sandoval's costumes and Martin P. Robinson's puppets. The chorus, an impeccable trio of women, is perfectly in step and deserving of its own musical. Transitioning from '90s schoolgirls to decadent divas, they are muses and quasi-feminists, encouraging Audrey to leave Orin (albeit for another man to protect her). There's much more text-wise that should have been left behind, but stellar direction and the choreography by Christopher Chase Carter keeps us entranced and looking ahead. **—YASMIN ZACARIA MIKHAEL** *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* Through 4/28: Wed-Fri 8 PM, Sat 5 and 8:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport, 773-325-1700, mercurytheaterchicago.com, \$35-\$65, \$35-\$60 seniors and military, \$35-\$55 students.

How great she art

Mahalia Jackson: Moving Thru the Light follows the usual Black Ensemble Theatre formula.

Jackie Taylor, the founder and leading light of the Black Ensemble Theatre, has spent her career penning and producing biographical musicals recounting the lives of prominent African-American musicians, most of whom are associated in some way with Chicago. These shows are always packed wall-to-wall with classic tunes, passionately sung by a cast of terrific singers and backed by an impressive band.

The Black Ensemble's current show, focusing on gospel legend Mahalia Jackson, follows this formula exactly. For two hours, the gospel hits keep coming: "How Great Thou Art," "His Eye is on the Sparrow," and "Didn't It Rain" are just three of the hits Robin DaSilva belts out in her superb impersonation of Jackson, accompanied by an ensemble of nine other fabulous singers and a superb band lead by music director Robert Reddick.

Along the way, Taylor presents biographical material about Jackson. This too follows the Taylor formula, and as in previous productions, these theatricalized book reports prove to be the weakest parts of the show. Taylor packs the play with factoids about Jackson—born in New Orleans in 1911, moved to Chicago in 1927, worked with Thomas A. Dorsey, often called the father of gospel music, who wrote the hit "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" which became Jackson's signature song—but it never shows us the person behind the show biz personality. This, too, is part of Taylor's formula: we almost never hear a discouraging word about the subjects of her shows.

Instead, as in Black Ensemble's many previous musical biographies, Taylor is content to let the music carry the show. **—JACK HELBIG** *MAHALIA JACKSON: MOVING THRU THE LIGHT* Through 4/14: Thu 7:30 PM, Fri 8 PM, Sat 3 and 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Black Ensemble Theatre, 4450 N. Clark, 773-769-4451, blackensembletheatre.org, \$49-\$65.

Texas forever

Remember the Alamo has more quirks than purpose.

It's a dubious honorific, but the press release for Nick Hart's metatheatrical, deadpan, quirkastic retelling of the Battle of the Alamo contains, without a doubt, the most eyebrow-raising disclaimer I think I've ever **➔**

ARTS & CULTURE

➡ come across reviewing theater in Chicago: “We recommend you do not sit in the front row or on an aisle if you want to remain in the theater to observe the entire production.”

Sure enough, between *Moth*-style personal essays about identity, inscrutable bits of Western-themed absurdism, and metaphors about barbecued milk, ensemble members playing key Texas Revolution figures hand randomly-selected audience members a can of Pabst Blue Ribbon and an egg (?), then usher them out of the black box space to a friendly “death concierge” into the lobby.

The idea of a production unexpectedly dismissing members of its own audience takes such a degree of anarchic chutzpah that it’s difficult not to love or at least appreciate the creativity and sense of risk behind it; I was a little disappointed, then, when the “deceased” were unceremoniously escorted back to their seats without comment a scene or two later. That half-in, half-out level of commitment to wild concepts is indicative of too much of this intermission-less hour-and-fifty-minute production, which presents history lessons, wild (but true) bits of Phil Collins trivia, and earnest personal revelations without any one of those elements solidifying the show’s sense of purpose. For every minute of joyous spontaneity, there are another two that make you want to ask, “Folks, what are we even doing here?” —**DAN JAKES** **REMEMBER THE ALAMO** Through 4/27: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Neo-Futurist Theater, 5153 N. Ashland, 773-878-4557, neofuturists.org, \$10-\$25, pay what you can Thu.

RR Last call
Two Pints pays tribute to human resilience and the power of Guinness.

So, two Irish actors walk into a bar. As does the entire audience. That’s the setup for Roddy Doyle’s *Two Pints*, imported from Dublin’s Abbey Theatre to Navy Pier. In the pub at Chicago Shakespeare, the audience members are flies on the wall (or rather, crammed around tiny tables surrounding the bar) as a pair of never-named blokes (Liam Carney and Philip Judge) banter over Guinness and the occasional whiskey.

The premise doesn’t sound promising. Does anyone need to spend two hours watching a couple of boozy dudes chatting about their troubles? But Doyle—ably assisted by director Caitríona McLaughlin—pulls off something approaching unexpectedly wonderful with *Two Pints*. As the men, served by Laurence Lowry’s wordless, poker-faced barman, commiserate, their low-key banter turns into a poetic exegesis on being and whatever it is that follows. There’s beauty and profundity in the proceedings, as well as a shade of *Waiting for Godot*. Both men scoff at the idea of an afterlife even as they cling to rituals that insist otherwise. When death does show up, it’s expected and even welcomed. Even so, it’s also accompanied by knee-buckling grief.

Carney and Judge capture the staggering blows that life (and its constant companion, death) mete out with humor and humanity, some of it bleak, all of it recognizable. Pathos plays no part here, not even when sorrow makes the men bend to the point of breaking. That they’re both still standing at last call is a testimony to the resilience humans can muster, with or without a pint of Guinness in hand. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** **TWO PINTS** Through 3/31: Wed-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Tue 7:30 PM, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, 800 E. Grand, 312-595-5600, chicagoshares.com, sold out; contact box office for availability. 

BOOK SWAP

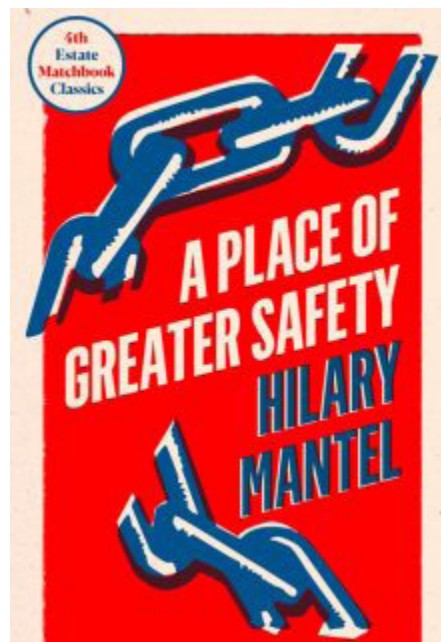
Lit recs for people in search of pleasure

In Book Swap, a *Reader* staffer recommends between two and five books and then asks a local wordsmith, literary enthusiast, or expert to do the same. In this installment, *Reader* deputy editor **KATE SCHMIDT** swaps book suggestions with **KAREN YATES**, producer and host of *Super Tasty*, a monthly cabaret-talk show about sex, the second season of which opens Friday, March 15, at Constellation.

Kate Schmidt, Reader deputy editor

I’d been on medical leave and couchbound for weeks, and I was desperate for pleasure—a stay-up-all-night-reading-it thriller or at least a good page-turner. Instead, trying to repeat what for me was the magic of Hilary Mantel’s *Wolf Hall*, I wound up mired in ***A PLACE OF GREATER SAFETY*** (Fourth Estate, 1992), her 872-page novel about the French Revolution. While stuck there, though, I discovered that a while back New York Review Books had reissued Nancy Mitford’s juicy 1952 popular history ***VOLTAIRE IN LOVE*** (New York Review Books Classics, 2012). The French playwright and polymath met more than his match in the brilliant countess Emilie du Chatelet, with whom he for years shared life, love, and work in a chateau equipped with astronomy and physics labs and a library of more than 21,000 books. Emilie’s husband the count was copacetic with the arrangement, and both lovers had other amours of various sorts over time, openly and not, but eventually Emilie sought a menage a quartre too many. Mitford described the book to her own famous intimates as “a shriek from beginning to end.”

But I still needed a thriller, preferably one with no guillotines or heads on pikes. In desperation, I asked my therapist, who smiled and said she’d just finished reading ***MY SISTER, THE SERIAL KILLER*** (Doubleday, 2018), Nigerian writer Oyinkan Braithwaite’s first novel. Set in Lagos, it’s a black comedy about a plain, steady nurse whose gorgeous sister, Korede, keeps calling on her to mop up after she, the irresistible one, stabs her dates to death. Or at least it seems so. It’s a page-turner, all right—and short and brisk enough that you might get to bed before two.



Karen Yates, producer-host Super Tasty

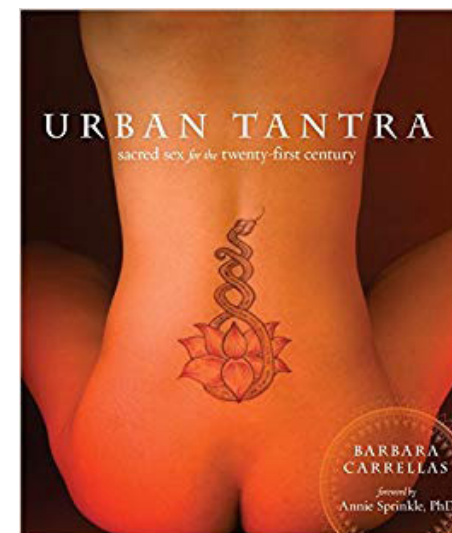
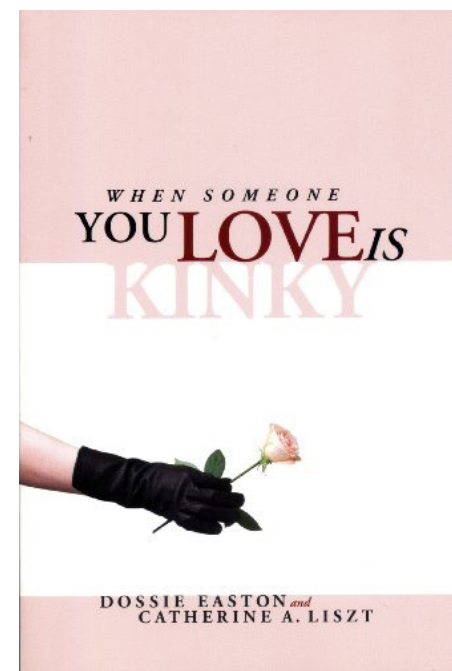
One book I’m recommending in these days when nonmonogamy is having another moment is ***THE SMART GIRL’S GUIDE TO POLYAMORY*** by Dedeker Winston (Skyhorse Publishing, 2017). Winston, who grew up a conservative Christian then broke with fundamentalist conventions, provides both an engaging synopsis of the many types of consensual nonmonogamy and a level-headed account of her open-relationship journey. The book is laid out like a course, offering history, questions to ponder, homework, tips on the communication skills needed to be polyamorous, and lists of the pros and cons of nonmonogamy. I’ve read a few books on poly, and Winston delivers a comprehensive guide great for female- and male-identifying people.

THE GENDER BOOK by Mel Reiff Hill, Jay Mays, et al (2014), is a terrific illustrated 90-page volume written by members of a blended gender collective. If you want to understand the nuances of the gender galaxy—that is, how cis, trans, nonbinary, etc. are defined, and how gender identity can be quite fluid—this book is for you. Plus, when I finished I just wanted to hug everyone involved in its making. It’s a feel-good read, for sure.

Do you know someone who loves her weekly orgy, or likes to be flogged or peed on, or anything else that freaks the crap out of you? Maybe you need to read ***WHEN SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS KINKY*** by Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Liszt (Greenery Press, 2000). This quick, nonsensationalistic read can be an

SUPER TASTY: SEX LIES

Fri 3/15, 8 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, constellation-chicago.com, \$25.



aid to understanding why some people prefer and/or are predisposed to kinky sex rather than vanilla. It also comes with a handy glossary of terms.

Finally, ***URBAN TANTRA: SACRED SEX FOR THE 21ST CENTURY*** by Barbara Carrellas (Ten Speed Press, second edition, 2017). There’s a reason this classic continues to turn up on lists of sex books worth your time and interest. It’s damn good and dispenses with the masculine-feminine hetero model of tantra that leaves a bunch of folks out in the cold. Carrellas gives excellent, straightforward exercises that focus on breathing, working with energy and intention, and how kink and tantra can work together. Try them solo or with a partner—or partners. 

ONION CITY FILM FESTIVAL

Thu 3/21-Sun 3/24, times vary; see website, Chicago Filmmakers, 5720 N Ridge, 773-293-1447, onioncityfilmfest.org, single ticket \$8, festival pass \$50.

FILM



MOVIES

Interesting times

The Onion City Film Festival conveys the disorientation of living in an era of great change.

By BEN SACHS

Sojourner

This year's edition of the Onion City Film Festival (formerly the Onion City Experimental Film and Video Festival) holds together nicely. Several clear themes emerge from the four-day event: the experience of women and other underrepresented groups, revolutionary politics, the relationship between people and their environments, and the humorous possibilities of experimenting with the film form. Curator Emily Eddy has wisely spread these themes evenly across the nine programs, so attendees can get a sampling of each no matter what day they go. In fact several themes appear in each program, barring a couple of exceptions. Thursday's opening night program, "Histories & Futures," contains work solely by female filmmakers, while program six, "The Vibrating World," playing Sunday at 3:30 PM, is devoted exclusively to films about travel.

A standout of the entire festival, Chicago-based Melika Bass's *Creature Companion* (playing in "Histories & Futures") arguably synthesizes all of the festival's concerns. A strange and funny meditation on the ideas of psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (who also inspired Dusan Makavejev's classic *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*), it's a quasi-narrative film about two women doing weird things with their bodies (gyrating, rubbing against trees and other objects) in and around a suburban home. Bass creates tension between the domesticated interiors and the unconventional physical behavior, which has roots in Reich's radical ideas about body-generated energy. *Creature Companion* also looks and moves like a narrative film despite presenting no conventional character development—the film brims with the energy of a story about to be born.

The other works in "Histories & Futures" are more direct in their engagement with so-

cial theory and practice. Local filmmaker Deborah Stratman's *Vever (for Barbara)* combines footage shot by the great artist and filmmaker Barbara Hammer in Guatemala in 1975 with an elderly Hammer explaining to Stratman on the soundtrack why she never printed the footage until now. It's a poignant and self-reflexive film about how artists engage with the world. Nazli Dinçel's *Instructions on How to Make a Film* presents academic discourse on representation alongside provocative, sexually charged imagery. Closing the program is Cauleen Smith's dense, associative *Sojourner*. That work pays tribute to John and Alice Coltrane before launching into a montage of female activists engaged in demonstrations, then peaks during scenes of a utopian female society in Joshua Tree National Park.

Another feminist standout is Cecelia Condit's *We Were Hardly More Than Children*, which plays in program four, "Ephemerality Means No One Can Take It From You," on Saturday at 5:30 PM. The short is alternately a portrait of painter Diane Messinger and a memory piece in which Messinger recounts helping a friend procure an abortion in the late 1960s and the hardships that followed. Condit combines documentary footage and abstract imagery to convey the lasting emotional pain felt by Messinger and her friend, achieving a moving effect.

The shorts that play before and after *We Were Hardly More Than Children* also consider movingly various underrepresented experiences. Kym McDaniel's *Exit Strategy #4* deals with the filmmaker's history with an eating disorder, Cecilia Dougherty's *Joe* features writer Joe Westmoreland reading a story about experiencing anti-gay bullying in high school, and in the work *In Conversation With Venus and Octavia* Xitlalli Sixta-Tarin

presents a direct-camera confession about being a transwoman alongside similarly framed confessions from Jennie Livingston's 1990 documentary *Paris Is Burning*.

Screening in program five, "Giving & Taking & Losing & Listening" (on Saturday at 8 PM), the 24-minute personal documentary *Lyndale* considers the family life of another trans filmmaker, Oli Rodriguez, who codirected the piece with Victoria Stob. *Lyndale* introduces viewers to Rodriguez's working-class family in the early 2000s, presenting colorful portraits of the filmmaker (who's shown just after he started identifying as a man), his brother (who's suffering from an unspecified mental illness), and their garrulous, recently remarried mother, who always seems to be smoking a cigarette. Also of note in program five is Saif Alsaegh's *1991*, which communicates the emotional isolation felt by the filmmaker, an Iraqi asylum-seeker living in the U.S., and his mother, who lives in Turkey. Alsaegh shows himself hanging out alone at a cabin in winter, occasionally talking to his mother via FaceTime and reading his mother's testimony about giving birth during the Iraq War in 1991. Despite the sadness of their situation, the work contains moments of levity, as when Alsaegh collaborates with his mother on a recipe over the phone.

In its consideration of what it's like to be a stranger in a strange country, *1991* sets the stage for many of the works in Sunday's three programs, which mostly deal with the experience of orienting oneself in the world. All three works in "The Vibrating World" address this theme head-on, but none more viscerally than Joshua Gen Solondz's (*tourism studies*), a dizzying, almost nauseating montage of footage the filmmaker shot in multiple countries over ten years. (Solondz heightens the effect by sometimes laying swirling geometric patterns over the footage.) *Bill Witherspoon's Thoughts on Light and Electricity* is a gorgeous-looking work that starts with footage shot by director Philip Rabalais for a corporate video about retired Sky Factory CEO Bill Witherspoon, then uses compelling split-screen effects to consider a daunting desert landscape with a mountain in the background. "The Vibrating World" closes with my favorite piece in the festival, *Electric Fogs*, Swiss filmmaker Samir Nahas's 36-minute personal documentary about hiking in the Alps after a rare illness rendered him bed-bound for months. Nahas employs impressive shots of mountains and trails to lead viewers to reflect on humanity's place in the world as a whole.

Zachary Epcar's *Life After Love*—playing in program seven, "Miserablism," at 5:30 PM—makes light of the themes introduced in *Electric Fogs*, employing eerily precise compositions and zooms to frame images of people sitting in their parked cars in a lot. Epcar offers a wry, curious view of car culture and the impossibility of establishing humanity within it. His sharp sense of form and humor anticipates some of the pieces in the final program, "The Truth! Ha!" (which starts at 7:30 PM). *I Don't Know When the Armageddon Is* and *Elder Abuse*, by local filmmakers Casey Puccini and Drew Durepos respectively, both begin as funny, knockabout family portraits, then get weird in surprising ways I won't spoil here. *Elder Abuse* features a memorable turn by Durepos's foul-mouthed grandmother, shown berating the filmmaker into giving her a cigarette. Not funny but certainly impressive on a formal level are Michael Gitlin's 3D portrait film *Eastern District Terminal* and Grace Mitchell's *Magic Bath*, a melange of footage and still images shot by the filmmaker between adolescence and early adulthood. Where Gitlin overwhelms with a heightened sense of location, Mitchell creates a rush of fragmented memories.

The highly personal *Magic Bath* speaks to how experimental filmmaking has always provided avenues for filmmakers to communicate intimate, even private experiences. If that's your favorite aspect of the avant-garde, be sure to catch the programs on Friday night. Sky Hopinka's *Fainting Spells* (which opens program two, "Casting Spells and Slowly Swaying" at 9 PM) uses an unpredictable collection of cinematic devices to create, in the filmmaker's words, "an imagined myth of the Indian pipe plant used by the Ho-Chunk to revive those who have fainted." In *A Small Place* (playing in program one, "The Tension Here," at 7 PM), Greta Snider uses abstract imagery to convey the disembodied feeling of living in solitary confinement. Another standout of the festival, Kera Mackenzie and Andrew Mausert-Mooney's *Stones for Thunder*, closes program one with a disjointed yet startlingly original montage that brings together shots of (among other things) nature, a television control room, fireworks, and gymnasts. Mackenzie and Mausert-Mooney convey nothing less than the disorientation of modern life in times of great change, a feeling that spans the personal and political selections of this year's Onion City. 

 @1bsachs

NOW PLAYING

RR The Circle

Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi (*The White Balloon*, *The Mirror*) takes a giant step forward with his third feature (2000), shifting his focus from little girls to grown women and presenting such a scorching look at what they put up with in their daily lives that it's no surprise the film was banned in his native country. This masterpiece is radical in form as well: it begins one morning in a hospital and ends that evening in a jail cell, the camera revolving 360 degrees in each space, and its narrative passes from one character to the next as in Luis Buñuel's *The Phantom of Liberty* (and Richard Linklater's *Slacker*). Extremely realistic yet highly artificial in structure, it's dazzling as a whole (if occasionally overloaded), recalling the Warner Brothers proletarian quickies of the 30s and the noir thrillers of the 40s (an effect enhanced by the fact that some of the women characters are fresh out of prison). The most talented disciple of Iranian master Abbas Kiarostami, Panahi actually tops him at leaving things out of a story to tantalize the viewer; he uses these ellipses for political as well as aesthetic ends, trusting the audience's decency as well as its imagination. You can't afford to miss this. In Farsi with subtitles. —JONATHAN ROSENBAUM 91 min. 35mm. Sun 3/17, 7 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

N Climax

After making several movies that resembled bad acid trips (*I Stand Alone*, *Irreversible*, *Enter the Void*), Gaspar Noé has made a movie about people experiencing a bad acid trip; the results may be described as thematic overkill. This takes place in the mid-1990s at a shuttered woodland boarding school where a couple dozen dancers (a mix of straight, gay, and bisexual men and women) rehearse their latest routine. One night someone spikes the dancers' sangria with LSD, and the group devolves into madness and violence. As usual Noé sets an ambience of sensory overload with strobe effects, dizzying Steadicam shots (some of them lasting more than ten minutes), and a near-constant thumping on the soundtrack. Yet it all feels empty show-offy and monotonously shrill this time around—maybe it's because, in juggling so many characters, Noé isn't able to humanize the drug's disconcerting effects by tying them to any one person's experience. Regardless the various attempts at shock value (with scenes involving self-mutilation and abortion) seem downright desperate. In English and subtitled French. —BEN SACHS R, 95 min. At Landmark Century Cinema. Visit landmarktheatres.com for times.

RR Cold War

Polish director Pawel Pawlikowski's latest film chronicles—stopping just short of celebrating—an affair that blazes across a postwar European landscape already strewn with too many ashes, and grimly divided by the Iron Curtain and closing borders. The attraction is immediate when Zula (Joanna Kulig) and Wiktor (Tomasz Kot) first meet in 1949 rural Poland. He's a refined composer and musicologist in his 40s, chafing under Stalinism as he catalogs traditional folk songs and auditions performers for a new touring folk troupe. She is one of the hopefuls, a vibrant 20-something scrapper determined to escape her dead-end lower-class origins. They are mismatched in terms of temperament, sensibility, pragmatism, ethics, and drive, but their sexual connection is so strong that their liaison survives her first betrayal (when she spies on him for a Communist party climber) and the many other disputes and recrimina-



Infinite Football

tions that follow throughout their 15-year-long on-again, off-again relationship. Their tempestuous union, their ceaseless longing for each other—even when, out of expedience, they enter different partnerships—puts them in the company of such mad lovers in Romantic literature as Catherine and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and the obsessed suitor in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. —ANDREA GRONVALL R, 88 min. Sat 3/16, 7 and 9:30 PM; and Sun 3/17, 4 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

Growing Up

Growing up as a metaphor of Taiwanese social development has been a preoccupying theme of the island's cinematic renaissance, and Taiwanese new-wave director Chen Kun-hou employs it again in this 1983 story of an illegitimate youth, born to impoverishment in the authoritarian 50s, who comes of age during the giddy economic expansion of the 70s. Produced and cowritten by Hou Hsiao-hsien. —PAT GRAHAM 100 min. 16mm. Sat 3/16, 7 PM. Filmfront

RR N Infinite Football

Of all the Romanian New Wave filmmakers, Corneliu Porumboiu (*Police, Adjective*) has the best sense of humor; his sweet-and-sour approach balances a stingingly satirical view of institutions with a warm acceptance of kooky individuals. That tension between cynicism and humanism is most pronounced in this short documentary feature, which profiles a middle-aged bureaucrat named Laurentiu Ginghina who's determined to change the rules of professional soccer. Ginghina envisions a version of the sport in which players are limited in their movement, thereby turning the focus of the game from athleticism to the movement of the ball. Porumboiu encourages his subject to speak at length, not with the purpose of making him look foolish, but to emphasize his idealism and thoughtfulness. Ginghina's new rules turn out to be laughably disastrous when actually put into practice—but such, Porumboiu notes, is the nature of idealism, whether rooted in communist, capitalist, or soccer-based ideology. In Romanian with subtitles. —BEN SACHS 70 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sun 3/17, 3 PM, and Thu 3/21, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

RR Julien Donkey-Boy

Julien (Ewen Bremner), who's distracted by obsessive thoughts and driven to compulsive behav-

ior, is surrounded by a semisatiric pathogenic family: filmmaker Werner Herzog dominates as a tough-loving father figure; pregnant sister Pearl (Chloë Sevigny) places phone calls to Julien from within the house, soothing him by pretending to be their dead mother; brother Chris (Evan Neumann) wrestles with Julien, competing for paternal praise and abuse. Shot on digital video, apparently without added light, this 1999 feature integrates linear narrative, free narrative, and nonnarrative; writer-director Harmony Korine (*Gummo*) nods to conventional drama by creating suspense about the imminent birth of a baby whose father's identity may seem mysterious, yet the movie is truly an open text—its generous poetry inspires free association rather than predictable emotion. —LISA ALSPECTOR 94 min. 35mm. Sat 3/16 and Thu 3/21, 9:30 PM. Music Box

Mister Lonely

After an eight-year break, Harmony Korine returns to feature filmmaking with another story of an outsider community, though in contrast to the grimy and occasionally grotesque *Gummo* (1997) and *Julien Donkey-Boy* (1999), this 2007 drama has a more gentle, Felliniesque feel. Diego Luna is a Michael Jackson impersonator who struts his stuff at old people's homes in Paris until a Marilyn Monroe impersonator (Samantha Morton) drags him off to a Scottish island inhabited by others of their inclination. The denizens don't seem particularly absorbed with their alter egos (which include Madonna, Charlie Chaplin, James Dean, Abraham Lincoln, Queen Elizabeth, and the Three Stooges), but few of them register strongly as themselves either; as in Korine's other movies, characterization is often just amplified weirdness. —J.R. JONES 112 min. Sat 3/16, midnight, and Wed 3/20, 9:30 PM. Music Box

RR The Naked Kiss

What can I tell you about a film that begins with a bald prostitute beating a man unconscious with her handbag? Except that it's undoubtedly Sam Fuller's vilest, sleaziest masterpiece (1964). With Constance Towers, Anthony Eisley, Virginia Grey, and Michael Dante. —DON DRUKER 90 min. 35mm. Fri 3/15, 7 and 9:30 PM; and Sun 3/17, 1:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

N The Sower

A bittersweet story of first love, lost love, and sexual scheming, Marine Francen's debut feature *The Sower* (*Le Semeur*) is set in a French village filled only with women and children after all men are forced out

following the republican uprising of 1851. With no idea of when—or if—their male counterparts will ever return, the women vow that if a man should stumble upon their pretty-as-a-picture mountainside community, he will become their shared husband. Naturally, this cannot end well. Soon after this promise is made, a rugged and handsome stranger (Alban Lenoir) with a mysterious past arrives, as if spoken into existence. At times the pacing runs slow and there's never quite enough tension, but the film is carried by the doe-eyed Pauline Burlet as Violette, a young woman who finds herself torn between her duty to her community and her duty to her heart. If viewers can muster up the patience to stick it out, they'll walk away feeling more than satisfied—and maybe even a little heartbroken. In French with subtitles. —NOËLLE D. LILLEY 98 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/16, 3:30 PM, and Mon 3/18, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Spring Breakers

Indie veteran Harmony Korine learns a valuable lesson: why hang around with disconsolate small-town weirdos (*Gummo*, *Julien Donkey-Boy*) when you can film young women shaking their bare breasts? This lively exploitation flick (2012) follows four college cuties (Selena Gomez, Vanessa Hudgens, Ashley Benson, and Rachel Korine, the filmmaker's wife) as they pull off a masked hold-up of a diner and, cash in hand, go roaring off to Florida for the title bacchanal; upon their arrival they get mixed up with drug dealer James Franco (wearing cornrows and grills and channeling Eric Roberts). Korine gestures toward social criticism, but essentially this is just an hour and a half of bongos, beers, tits, and ass, thinly dressed as *Natural Born Killers*. —J.R. JONES R, 92 min. 35mm. Fri 3/15 and Sun 3/17, 9:30 PM. Music Box

Star Trek

Following the perfunctory *Star Trek: Nemesis* (2002), Paramount has handed over the beloved sci-fi franchise to a fresh team of producers (among them J.J. Abrams, creator of the TV series *Lost*) and a cast of young actors playing the original crew of the *Enterprise*. The new players give the 2009 version a welcome jolt, and the screenwriters have taken advantage of the rebooted narrative to amp up the young lust, as Kirk (Chris Pine) and Spock (Zachary Quinto) vie for the attentions of the smoking-hot Uhura (Zoe Saldana). The familiar character comedy survives intact, and an interstellar conflict between the Federation and those old blowhards the Romulans makes for an enjoyably mindless thrill ride. What's missing here—and from most of the movies—is the thought-provoking, concept-driven sci-fi that made the original series so engaging. Abrams directed; with Simon Pegg as Scotty, John Cho as Sulu, and Leonard Nimoy as a wizened old Spock from the future. —J.R. JONES PG-13, 126 min. Fri 3/15–Mon 3/18, 11 PM. Logan

RR Sunset Boulevard

Billy Wilder's searing, funny, morbid look at the real tinsel beneath the phony tinsel (1950). Aging silent-movie vamp Gloria Swanson takes up with William Holden, a two-bit screenwriter on the make, and virtually holds him captive in her Hollywood gothic mansion. Erich von Stroheim, once her director, now her butler, is the other figure in this menage-a-weird. A tour de force for Swanson and one of Wilder's better efforts. —DON DRUKER 110 min. Tue 3/19–Thu 3/21, 10:30 PM. Logan

N Tiger Milk

Oh, to be a teenage girl in Berlin. Based on Stefanie de Velasco's novel of the same name, Ute

Wieland's feature puts the audience in the depths of adolescence—complete with heavy black eyeshadow, punk music, and cigarettes in the school bathroom. The first half feels breezy and low stakes as it follows best friends Nini and Jameelah's quest to lose their virginities over summer break. But the film quickly takes a dark turn when Jameelah's family is threatened with deportation and the two friends witness a murder. It's ambitious, though not impossible, to give a fluffy premise serious weight—but *Tiger Milk*'s real flaw is trying to cover too much ground. Unfortunately, the most poignant things *Tiger Milk* has to say are overshadowed by lesser plot points that eat up valuable screen time. In German with subtitles. —**CODY CORRALL** 107 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/15, 6 PM, and Wed 3/20, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

RR Touch of Evil

The restored version of Orson Welles's classic 1955 noir. "Welles stars as the sheriff of a corrupt border town who finds his nemesis in visiting Mexican narcotics agent Charlton Heston," wrote Dave Kehr in his Reader review of the original version. "The witnesses to this weirdly gargantuan struggle include Janet Leigh, Marlene Dietrich, Akim Tamiroff, and Joseph Calleia, who holds the film's moral center with sublime uncertainty." —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 111 min. 35mm. Former Reader film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum lectures at the Tuesday screening. Fri 3/15, 2 PM, and Tue 3/19, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center



The Sower

Striesow) who needs someone to ride shotgun as he negotiates with dodgy entrepreneurs. Yella proves to be an exceptionally shrewd boardroom operator, though her relationship with her respectful new colleague is shot through with suspicion and sexual tension. Petzold strikes a perfect balance between corporate intrigue and metaphysical mystery; his 2007 drama is filled with suspense but ends in delicious ambiguity. In German with subtitles. —**J.R. JONES** 89 min. 35mm. Sun 3/17, 11:30 AM. Music Box

ALSO PLAYING

An Alternate History of Cinema: Female Pioneers

Local filmmaker and DePaul professor Shayna Connelly gives an illustrated talk on various female film pioneers, including Alice Guy-Blache, Lois Weber, Dorothy Arzner, Ida Lupino, and several independent and experimental directors. . Sat 3/16, 7 PM. Chicago Filmmakers

Ashcan

Willy Perelsztejn directed this Luxembourg/Swiss drama about the interrogation of Nazi officials after WWII, presented as rehearsals for Perelsztejn's play on the subject. In English and subtitled French and German. 90 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/16, 8 PM, and Tue 3/19, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Trash Humpers

Photocopying one's naked ass is easy enough; the trick is getting other people to anoint the result as art. That's more or less what the reliably tedious provocateur Harmony Korine (*Gummo*, *Julien Donkey-Boy*) pulled off when this interminable piece of crap copped a big prize at the 2009 Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival. It's a must-see for anyone who relishes lo-fi video footage of creeps in dime-store Halloween masks shuffling garbage cans, fellating trees, smashing TVs, dragging plastic baby dolls behind bicycles, doing herky-jerky dances, making high-pitched shrieking noise

es, and abusing musical instruments. —**CLIFF DOERKSEN** 78 min. 35mm. Fri 3/15, midnight, and Tue 3/19, 9:30 PM. Music Box

RR Yella

German filmmaker Christian Petzold (*The State I Am In*) has a gift for creating quiet, watchful characters, and his still waters run especially deep in *Yella* (Nina Hoss), a beautiful young woman chronically abused by men. Her crazy ex-husband is stalking her, and when she takes an accounting job in a new town, her boss tries to exploit her professionally and sexually. By chance she hooks up with a handsome venture capitalist (Devi

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THE SOWER (FRANCE)
WONDERFUL LOSERS (LITHUANIA)
THE MAN WITH THE MAGIC BOX (POLAND)
WINTER FLIES (CZECH REPUBLIC)
ASHCAN (LUXEMBOURG)
INFINITE FOOTBALL (ROMANIA)
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➔ N The Beach Bum

Harmony Korine directed this comedy about a stoner (Matthew McConaughey). With Snoop Dogg, Isla Fisher, Stefania LaVie Owen, Jimmy Buffett, Zac Efron, and Martin Lawrence. *R*, 95 min. Korine attends both of these advance screenings. Mon 3/18, 7 and 9:30 PM. Music Box

Buñuel in the Labyrinth of the Turtles

Salvador Simó directed this Spanish animated film about filmmaker Luis Buñuel and the production of his 1932 documentary *Las Hurdes*. In Spanish and French with subtitles. 80 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/15, 6:15 PM, and Sat 3/16, 3:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Captive State

Rupert Wyatt directed this science fiction thriller about an alien occupation of Earth, ten years in, and set in a Chicago neighborhood. With John Goodman, Ashton Sanders, Jonathan Majors, Machine Gun Kelly, and Vera

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Farmiga. *PG-13*, 109 min. AMC Dine-in Block 37, Ford City, River East 21

Combat Obscura

Miles Lagoze directed this documentary comprised of his own footage as a combat photographer in Afghanistan and of others' footage, to provide a look at the daily behind-the-scenes life of Marines. 70 min. At Facets Cinémathèque. Visit facets.org for showtimes.

Common Carrier

James N. Kienetz Wilkins directed this 2017 experimental feature about a group of artists and others, which blends fiction, improvisation, and documentary. 78 min. Wilkins attends the screening. Fri 3/15, 7 PM. Univ. of Chicago Logan Center for the Arts [FREE](#)

A Faithful Man

Louis Garrel directed and stars in this French comedy-drama about a man who might have a second chance with his former girlfriend, after she cheated on him eight years before with his best friend. In French with subtitles. 75 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sun 3/17, 3 PM, and Thu 3/21, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Five Feet Apart

Two teens with cystic fibrosis meet while in the hospital, but their budding romance is complicated by the need to stay several feet apart to avoid cross-infecting each other. Justin Baldoni directed. *PG-13*, 116 min. AMC Dine-in Block 37, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Ford City, River East 21

Fragment of an Empire

Fridrikh Ermler directed this 1929 silent Soviet film about a soldier who regains his lost memory and identity,

FILM

Get showtimes at chicagoreader.com/movies.

finding himself confused at the new socialist society. 109 min. 35mm restored print. Dennis Scott provides live accompaniment. Sat 3/16, 11:30 AM. Music Box

Gloria Bell

A fifty-something woman in L.A. enjoys life and looks for love in the city's dance clubs. Sebastián Lelio directed. With Julianne Moore, John Turturro, Michael Cera, Caren Pistorius, Brad Garrett, Jeanne Tripplehorn, and Rita Wilson. *R*, 102 min. At Landmark Century Cinema. Visit landmarktheatres.com for times.

Films by Sky Hopinka

A program of films by experimental filmmaker Hopinka, which often focus on his Ho-Chunk/Pechanga native identity and culture. Hopinka attends the screening. Fri 3/15, 7 PM. Museum of Contemporary Art

Iceman

The leader of a neolithic clan seeks vengeance on those who massacred his people, while having to care for a newborn that survived the attack. Felix Randau directed this 2017 German-Italian-Austrian drama. In German with subtitles. 96 min. At Facets Cinémathèque. Visit facets.org for showtimes.

The Image You Missed

Donal Foreman directed this Irish-French documentary about trying to connect with his late estranged father, who was also a documentary filmmaker, by searching through a trove of photos, film reels, and other items. 74 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/15, 8:15 PM, and Mon 3/18, 6:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Little Harbor

Iveta Grofova directed this 2017 Czech-Slovak film about a neglected young girl who suddenly is "mother" to two abandoned babies. In Slovak and Czech with subtitles. 90 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/15, 4 PM, and Tue 3/19, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Love and Bullets

A mafia boss fakes his own death in this 2017 Italian comedy-musical crime film. Brothers Antonio and Marco Manetti directed. In Italian with subtitles. 134 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sun 3/17, 4:30 PM, and Thu 3/21, 7:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

The Man with the Magic Box

Bodo Kox directed this 2017 Polish sci-fi film about a janitor who finds a time travel device. In Polish with subtitles. 103 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/16, 5:30 PM, and Mon 3/18, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Films by Evan Meaney

A program of experimental videos and virtual-reality works by media artist Evan Meaney. Meaney attends the screening. Thu 3/21, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Red Cow

Tsivia Barkai directed this Israeli coming-of-age drama about a teen girl in the 1990s. In Hebrew with subtitles. 90 min. Showing as part of the JCC Chicago Jewish Film Festival. Sun 3/17, 7:30 PM. Music Box

Smuggling Hendrix

In this Cypriot comedy, a musician's plans to emigrate

are upset when his dog runs away to the Turkish side of the country's divided capital. In English and subtitled Greek and Turkish. 93 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/15, 8 PM, and Wed 3/20, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Stateless Film Festival: Stories from Turkish Freedom Seekers

A program of four short films on Turkish immigrants. Followed by a panel discussion. Tickets available at actingoutawareness.org. Mon 3/18, 7:30 PM. Davis

Transit

Christian Petzold directed this 2018 German-French drama about a man in WWII, using the papers and identity of a dead author, who accidentally meets the author's wife. In German and French with subtitles. 101 min. At Music Box Theatre. Visit musicboxtheatre.com for showtimes.

The Waldheim Waltz

Ruth Beckermann directed this Austrian documentary about former UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim and his Nazi past. In English and subtitled German and French. 93 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/15, 2 PM, and Sun 3/17, 4:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Winter Flies

Olmo Omerzu directed this Czech-Slovak coming-of-age film about two teens on a road trip in a stolen car. In Czech with subtitles. 85 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/16 and Mon 3/18, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Wonder Park

A young girl's fantasy amusement park of rides and talking animals comes to life in this animated kid's film. Dylan Brown directed. *PG*, 85 min. AMC Dine-in Block 37, ArcLight, Century 12 and CineArts 6, City North 14, Ford City, Harper Theater, River East 21

Wonderful Losers: A Different World

Arunas Matelis directed this Lithuanian documentary about the bicycle racing world's behind-the-scenes participants, who give up fame to support their team. In English and subtitled Italian and Lithuanian. 72 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/16, 5:15 PM, and Wed 3/20, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

You Are My Friend

Peter Lataster and Petra Lataster-Czisch directed this Dutch documentary about an immigrant Macedonian boy as he learns a new language and culture. In Dutch with subtitles. 77 min. Showing as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/15, 4:15 PM, and Wed 3/20, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Young Soul Rebels

Set in London during the summer of 1977, this British feature (1991) by Isaac Julien (*Looking for Langston*) centers on the effect of a murder on the friendship of two black disc jockeys (Valentine Nonyela and Mo Sesay), one gay and one straight, who are running a pirate radio station. With Frances Barber, Danielle Scillitoe, and Shyro Chung. *R*, 105 min. 35mm. Fri 3/15, 7 PM. Northwestern University Block Museum of Art [FREE](#) [B&B](#)

How did the “industry plant” take root?

Hip-hop’s favorite conspiracy theory is now used to discredit breakout successes in other genres—and it’s no more plausible there.

By LEOR GALIL



JULIA KUO

To be alive and awake in 2019 is to face a deluge of disasters, travesties, and impending mass extinctions. Last month scientific journal *Nature Geoscience* published a report explaining how climate change could lead to the disappearance of stratocumulus clouds in roughly a century, which would add a potentially civilization-ending eight degrees Celsius to the warming already under way—for comparison’s sake, the Paris climate agreement hopes to limit warming to a merely calamitous 1.5 degrees. Meanwhile, the human disaster who somehow remains the U.S. president denies there’s a problem—he’d rather build a monument to xenophobia that a majority of the country’s citizens oppose, while detaining thousands of migrant children apart from their families. One look at the headlines on any given day can provide nightmare fuel for weeks. But according to hundreds if not thousands of fans, commentators, and musicians on YouTube, Reddit, and Twitter, the already overwhelming list of reasons to abandon hope in humanity isn’t long enough: we should also be angry about industry plants.

What are industry plants? Without conceding that they exist, I can say that they took their present form in hip-hop about a decade ago, and that in the past couple years similar rumors and accusations have spread to other genres, including pop and indie rock. The definition of “industry plant” varies based on who’s making the allegation (and about whom), but nearly every version, no matter how haphazardly sketched, shares a few of the same features. It works like this, more or less: a label (or anyone with deep pockets) plucks an act out of obscurity, invests time and resources to develop them, and then reaps ➔



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SUNDAY, MARCH 17 7PM

Graham Nash

at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N Southport Ave

THURSDAY, MARCH 21 8:30PM

Avishai Cohen Quartet

at Constellation, 3111 N Western Ave

FRIDAY, MARCH 22 8PM

Zaiko Langa Langa

50th Anniversary Tour

FRIDAY, MARCH 22 8PM

Glen Phillips

In Szold Hall

SATURDAY, MARCH 23 8PM

Garnet Rogers

with special guest Crys Matthews • In Szold Hall

SUNDAY, MARCH 24 3PM

Cherish the Ladies

with special guest Connie Kaldor

THURSDAY, MARCH 28 8PM

Robert Ellis - Texas Piano Man

with special guest Ian O'Neil (of Deer Tick) • In Szold Hall

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the benefits when they finally release a song or album and it rockets to the top of the charts. If you're thinking this sounds a lot like how labels ordinarily operate, well, even the people who believe in industry plants agree with you. A couple years ago one Reddit user explained that labels create plants "ultimately to make them and the artist money."

To be fair, industry plants aren't supposed to be routine signees. The term is nearly always invoked to suggest successful musicians disguised as independents—you're supposed to accept that they've made their own careers through grassroots self-promotion and touring, when in fact a massive corporation has engineered the whole thing and propagated their work in secrecy. It's basically a conspiracy theory devised by skeptical fans to explain an artist's sudden success, and it's been used to discredit just about every rising musician who has attracted those fans' ire. Similar language arose in the 90s to describe secret sellouts in the punk scene—though in those cases, sometimes a corporation really was surreptitiously involved.

In the past few years, industry-plant chatter has moved from the Web's anonymous corners into mainstream discourse. DJ Akademiks, the Alex Jones of hip-hop, loves conspiracy theories, and unsurprisingly he also loves talking about industry plants—I've seen several clips of him doing so on the popular *Complex* debate show *Everyday Struggle*. (He didn't reply to an e-mail I sent him a couple weeks ago.) Musicians have bought into the theory too: in the 2016 single "Exposed," Atlanta rapper

Russ takes shots at unnamed industry plants while explaining how his grind got him a deal with Columbia, which would corelease his platinum-selling 2017 album *There's Really a Wolf*. The term "industry plant" also made an appearance in a May 2018 *New York Times* profile of indie-pop wonder Clairo, who's been a magnet for "industry plant" insults since her 2017 single "Pretty Girl," which she recorded at home when she was 18 (it went viral and racked up 29 million YouTube views).

Streaming technology has fed rumors of industry

plants by making it easier for unknown musicians to cross over with viral hits—*Billboard* played an inadvertent role as well, by deciding last year to weight streamed songs and albums more heavily in its chart data. This increases the odds of unforeseen anomalies appearing on those charts: the version of "Baby Shark" produced by South Korean education company Pinkfong, for instance, debuted on the *Billboard* Hot 100 at number 32 in January.

Fake Shore Drive founder Andrew Barber sees the same connection between the rise of streaming and the growing fixation on industry plants. "I think streaming brought this thing back to life and really made it a talking point," he says. "Because some artists could come from absolutely nothing one week, you've never even heard of them—ten days after you first heard their name, their songs are charting, and they're the talk of social media. Like a Blueface—guy comes out of nowhere. Next thing you know, that's all you see on your timeline."

Barber remembers first hearing the phrase "industry plant" in the late aughts, when music bloggers had established themselves as cultural gatekeepers. "It was just a way to kind of explain artists that would come out of nowhere that weren't agreed upon by the blog delegation, that all of a sudden would skyrocket, get a bunch of money behind them, and then get all kinds of press and be lauded over," Barber says. "A lot of times that was hard to explain, and so I think that is how the term 'industry plant' was born."

Hip-hop message boards provided fertile soil for this theory throughout the 2010s. I've found threads dating back as far as 2012 where people are arguing on the hip-hop boards at the Coli and IGN about who might be an industry plant. Almost any rapper who experienced a sudden surge of popularity without help from a label got slapped with the tag—and even when they announced they'd signed with one, it was seen as a vindication of the idea that a label had been secretly involved all along. True believers can take even the absence of evidence as evidence: In a 2012 thread, when fellow users pressed IGN commenter dizzY41111 to support a claim that Atlanta rapper Trinidad James was an industry plant, dizzY replied, "We don't know, dude. That's why he's a plant." Mid-thread, in December of that year, James signed to Def Jam, and dizzY considered that proof: "And there we fucking go. What a surprise."

The tipping point for the spread of the industry-plant concept happened in June 2015, when *XXL* published the cover of its annual "Freshman Class" issue. The magazine's

The term "industry plant" is nearly always invoked to suggest successful musicians disguised as independents—you're supposed to accept that they've made their own careers through grassroots self-promotion and touring, when in fact a massive corporation has engineered the whole thing and propagated their work in secrecy.

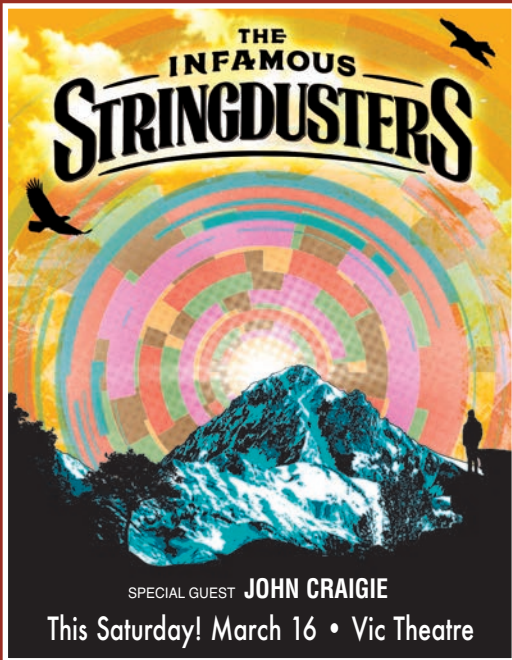
hand-picked roster of rising rappers always provokes some backlash—at least one of the rappers reliably draws heat for supposedly lacking the commercial momentum or grassroots support to merit such an accolade. That year, Atlanta rapper Raury appeared on the cover wearing a white T-shirt reading "industry plant." A couple days later, *Complex* published a brief, incisive primer on the term, calling it something "that only hip-hop culture could've bothered to come up with."

Conversations about industry plants in hip-hop remind me of arguments about who was "selling out" in the 90s punk and indie-rock scenes. Before the alternative-rock boom and the resulting major-label feeding frenzy, musicians recording subversive music more or less had to release it on independent labels—thriving without help from an obviously corrupt and out-of-touch industry was a point of pride for many artists, and remains so today. But "selling out" lost its sting once sales of physical media started to tank and more and more bands had to take whatever money they could get, no matter who was offering—probably sometime between 1996, when Vans start- ➔



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ed sponsoring Warped Tour, and 2002, when the Shins licensed "New Slang" to McDonald's.

"Industry plant" accusations feel like the kind of criticism early-90s rock bands would attract once word got out that they were entertaining a major-label offer—suspicion about big-money music-biz players just needed longer to take hold in hip-hop. The difference, of course, is that in the early 90s audiences lamented their favorite acts throwing away their hard-earned credibility by taking the devil's paycheck—only rarely was the charge that those acts had been puppets from the start. Once the idea of the industry plant arose, though, it found an audience among Extremely Online indie-rock fans who'd long since stopped caring about selling out—and one of the main reasons it did was misogyny.

"It definitely started coming up with the rise of the female indie-rock star," says Avery Springer, who fronts local emo band Retirement Party. Outside hip-hop, women are much more likely to be called industry plants—I've seen the term used against Phoebe Bridgers, Billie Eilish, Lorde, Dua Lipa, and Halsey. Last year Springer posted on her band's Twitter account, "Maybe if we start the rumor that we're an industry plant, the big suits will believe it and give us a lot of money." In her circles, at least, the accusation is so implausible that it works as a punch line. "I feel like it's pretty obvious that we're not an industry plant—I don't think that my voice and appearance is good enough for us to be," she says. "I think that a lot of people understand that the term doesn't really hold much weight."

Springer's self-deprecating argument—that Retirement Party can't be an industry plant, because the industry would do better—doesn't work for artists who become stars. In a 2018 interview for the Pitchfork podcast *In Sight Out*, Chance the Rapper explained that he'd developed a pretty thick skin, but that "industry plant" accusations still got to him. No other independent artist who's built a career from the ground up has had his level of success, and that's invited a lot of skepticism about his bona fides.

"There've been success stories for indie artists, but very rarely would somebody be indie and end up winning three Grammys and being one of the biggest artists in the world," Barber says. "That shocked people. What do you do if you can't explain something, and you're not a part of it? Make up a conspiracy theory."

The notion of industry plants has become so thoroughly ingrained in hip-hop culture that the term itself has started to break down. To determine what somebody means by it, you

have to ask. For local rapper Ric Wilson, it's simply a more confrontational way to refer to a label signee—his definition harks back to labels' long history of grooming promising artists. "I feel like an industry plant is Stevie Wonder—somebody found off of the street who's really talented and they literally give them the resources and create their whole brand, or help create their brand, and put resources behind that to help expand that brand to more ears and more people," Wilson says. He seems to be trying to neutralize the term as an insult by equating it with business as usual. "I feel like industry plants are cool," he says. "I feel like industry plants are most of our favorite artists, so people just need to relax."

A Canadian YouTuber named John, who operates a channel as Progress, considers an "industry plant" to be a young musician snapped up by a label before having a chance to develop a sense of agency or artistic identity. He sees the practice as fundamentally predatory. "You see how damaging it is to them, as younger people—look at Demi Lovato, look at Miley Cyrus, Justin Bieber, all of these people who came up as young stars," John says. "It shows you the industry's not meant for people who are not ready."

John developed an interest in industry plants this past fall: Trippie Redd's November mixtape, *A Love Letter to You 3*, features a rapper John had never heard of named Baby Goth, who's signed to UMG imprint Republic. At the time, she hadn't released any material on her own, so John looked into her back story. In January, he uploaded a YouTube video where he unpacks her brief career as Bria Bueno, an aspiring pop singer who'd tried to make it independently with a failed Indiegogo appeal. He claims that Republic basically gave her a completely new image and sound. The clip went viral, giving John's channel its first hit with more than 600,000 views. It also forced Baby Goth's hand: her team rushed her into her first interview, with popular but problematic podcast *No Jumper*, which appeared online less than two weeks after John's video.

I've spent time watching more than half a dozen YouTubers fixated on industry plants, and John is the most level-headed among them. Rather than chase views and subscribers by saying the most outlandish and inflammatory things he can in as many places as possible, he does his research—to him, industry plants are less part of a diabolical scheme and more just regular people who've signed themselves over to a system they can't control. "In no way doing any of these videos am I wanting to destroy a person's career—it's more to show people as a warning to say, 'This



could happen if you decide to do something like this," he says. "It's almost like an obligation to me—I'm making the content so people know it happens."

John thinks more transparency would help, especially given that young artists broadcast so much of their lives (or what we're supposed to accept as their lives) on social media. "I want to start making sure that people understand that it's the label and the industry people who are controlling these people and making them do a lot of these things, and that's the thing that I don't really like that much," he says. "That's why I want to keep making the videos—so that people can see what a label can do."

Conspiracy theories are an expression of belief in an ordered universe—of the idea that somebody or something is in control, and that things don't simply happen for unpredictable or inexplicable reasons. The conspiracy theory of the industry plant hinges exactly on what a label can do, to borrow John's words. It requires a music industry that's developed an infallible formula for secretly sculpting obscure young artists into breakout stars—because if that formula weren't infallible, wouldn't it imply the existence of hundreds if not thousands of artists under secret label control who never go anywhere? Who can believe in a business that could stay solvent under those conditions?

"If this was just like a thing where people banded together and said, 'All right, let's plant this person in the industry,' don't you think it would happen more often, and they would do it to more people on their roster?" Barber asks. "Having seen behind the curtain and understanding how things work—obviously there are certain artists who get pushed, and others don't. But there's no exact formula to create a star." ■

 @imLeor

PICK OF THE WEEK

Oozing Wound are saltier than ever on *High Anxiety*



EVAN JENKINS

Oozing Wound, Platinum Boys, Hitter, Dim
Sat 3/19, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+

ON THEIR BRAND-NEW fourth full-length, *High Anxiety* (Thrill Jockey), Chicago's Oozing Wound have finally reached peak ooze. Formed in October 2011 by three noise rockers with a taste for heavy metal, Oozing Wound have come to be loved for their salty lyrics as much as for their off-kilter take on breakneck thrash. Kicking off with a cheery little number titled "Surrounded by Fucking Idiots," *High Anxiety* takes everything great about Oozing Wound and multiplies it by ten. The whiplash tempos are still in place, the crushing

volumes and fuzz-fried bass are still overwhelming, and it still overflows with agonizingly suspenseful repetition, but this time the band lean further than ever from the traditional thrash metal of their past records, instead basking in the glory of harsh, dissonant noise. *High Anxiety* sounds like a noise-rock band with the worst attitudes on the planet playing at 220 BPM—and it's a record that will be hard to top. Oozing Wound have always been a next-level group, and this is easily their magnum opus. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

THURSDAY14

MICHAEL FOSTER, KATHERINE YOUNG, AND MICHAEL ZERANG See also Saturday and Sunday, when Foster performs in different configurations. 9 PM, Elastic, 3429 W. Diversey, \$10.

It takes work to have a place to play, and Michael Foster knows the issue as both an organizer and musician. He's a cofounder of Queer Trash, which establishes dedicated queer performance events at venues around New York City. The collective hosts experimental and improvised music, harsh noise, performance art, and fashion; Foster's music in the Ghost, the Andrew Barker Trio, the New York Review of Cocksucking, and duos with percussionists Ben Bennett, Claire Rousay, and Weasel Walter fall into a few of those categories. Though he's recorded with tapes and electronics, his principal instruments are the soprano and tenor saxophones, whose natural voices he perverts with amplification and outboard attachments such as balloons and found objects. His playing ranges from rasping textural explorations and bubbling pools of noise to full-bore free-jazz blowouts, which made him a simpatico collaborator for local percussionist Michael Zerang and bassoonist and electronic musician Katherine Young when he came to Chicago in 2018. The three musicians recently released a CD recording of their first encounter, *Bind the Hand(s) That Feed* (Relative Pitch), which encompasses cooperative investigations of barely audible timbres and combative exchanges of broken sound. Foster, Young, and Zerang will reconvene at Elastic on Thursday night; Foster will also appear with frequent partner (and former Chicagoan) Weasel Walter at Cafe Mustache on Saturday, as well as with locals Dave Rempis (saxophones), Tyler Damon (drums), and Jason Roebke (bass) at the Hungry Brain on Sunday. —**BILL MEYER**



Michael Foster JULIA DRATEL

FRIDAY15

MARIE DAVIDSON Angelica and MTZ open. 10 PM, Smartbar, 3730 N. Clark, \$15-\$20, 21+

In the relationship between musician and listener, seduction is an overrated quality; isn't the idea that an artist has to woo their audience to welcome them and create a sense of intimacy kind of degrading? On her 2018 album, *Working Class* ➔



Eilen Jewell
COURTESY OF
ARTIST

continued from 31

Woman (Ninja Tune), Canadian electronic producer and singer Marie Davidson seems to suggest that a far better option is to foreground a shared, deeply felt sense of disgust. The record's opening triptych—"Your Biggest Fan," "Work It," and "The Psychologist"—pairs modular synth workouts with arrhythmic, sneering rambles about the high-pressure insanities experienced by touring electronic musicians. Davidson carries this concept beyond underground dance music scene banter and inside jokes, and into the general anxieties of modern-day working life. The narrative abruptly recedes after those three tracks, but the themes continue throughout the album. Ambient-leaning tracks such as "Day Dreaming" and "La Chambre Intérieure" unspool with a striking physicality, while the psychodrama of "The Tunnel" steers more toward the chaotic noise-dance of artists such as Halcyon Veil and NON. The emotional register of the record veers between terror and camp (a common duality in sounds influenced by the DJs at Berlin's famed Berghain nightclub), much like B-movie horror. At times, the tracks in the latter half of the album meander toward incoherence, but everything snaps back into place in the understated highlight "So Right." A swooning nod to the sublimity of connection on the dance floor, *Working Class Woman* is a reminder that while DJing might be work—and tough work at that—the music it brings forth can be deliriously transcendent for artist and listener alike. —AUSTIN BROWN

GIRL K Fran and Engine Summer open. 9 PM, Schubas, 3159 N. Southport, \$10-\$13. 18+

Chicago guitarist-vocalist Kathy Patino launched indie-pop group Girl K as a solo project about two years ago. By the fall of 2017, she'd built a full-fledged band, recruiting drummer Ajay Raghuraman, bassist Alex Pieczynski, and lead guitarist Kevin Sheppard, and they released their debut album, *Sunflower Court*, that October. In the band's short lifetime, they've found a home among local rockers: Patino told *Melting Magazine* last year that Varsity showed her there's a place here for sweetly inviting but solemn rock songs peppered with power-pop hooks. Beach Bunny front woman Lili Trifilio especially inspires her: "Her vocals and melodies and lyrics break my heart and motivate me to really put all my soul and being into my music and to never let anyone make me feel small or inferior," Patino said. And from what I've heard of Girl K's forthcoming second album, *For Now*, Patino has become a more confident leader and singer; though the band edges toward languid dream pop on "Ride," Patino's rapid, breathy delivery helps ratchet up the energy. —LEOR GALIL

EILEN JEWELL Jordie Lane opens. 8 PM, City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph, \$22-\$32. 18

Boise native Eilen Jewell has been recording Americana and roots music for close to 15 years, and she continues to find new material and new approaches; in concert, she's as likely to launch

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC

PIVOTAL CHICAGO MUSICIANS THAT SOMEHOW HAVE NOT GOTTEN THEIR JUST DUES by PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE

GEORGIA WHITE

IT'S ALMOST DISTURBING HOW LITTLE INFORMATION SURVIVES ABOUT PRE-WAR BLUES VOCALIST & PIANIST GEORGIA WHITE, ONCE TOUTED BY THE DECCA LABEL AS "THE WORLD'S GREATEST BLUES SINGER." WHITE WAS BORN MARCH 9, 1903, IN SANDERSVILLE, GEORGIA (ACCORDING TO THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEGENDARY BLUESMAN BIG BILL BROONZY), AND WAS GIGGING IN SOUTH-SIDE CHICAGO CLUBS BY THE LATE 1920S. HER RECORDING CAREER BEGAN IN MAY 1930, WHEN SHE SANG "WHEN YOU'RE SMILING (THE WHOLE WORLD SMILES WITH YOU)" WITH JIMMY NOONE'S APEX CLUB ORCHESTRA FOR THE VOCALION LABEL. 5 YEARS LATER SHE RETURNED TO THE STUDIO FOR DECCA, AND BY 1941 SHE'D CUT MORE THAN 100 SONGS FOR THE LABEL, SHOWING OFF HER VERSATILE CONTRALTO VOICE—SHE COULD BE GRITTY AND GRUFF OR CLASSY AND MELLOW. (SHE ALSO DID AT LEAST ONE SESSION AS GEORGIA LAWSON, POSSIBLY HER REAL NAME.) WHITE WAS AN ADEPT BARRELHOUSE-STYLE PIANIST, AND WROTE A FAIR PERCENTAGE OF HER OWN MATERIAL; SHE WAS OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY OTHER ACE MUSICIANS, AMONG THEM GUITARISTS LONNIE JOHNSON, "KEY BANJO" ROBINSON, AND LES

PAUL. HER BIGGEST SUCCESS WAS PROBABLY A 1936 VERSION OF THE CLASSIC "TROUBLE IN MIND," BUT HER DECCA SIDES COVERED A LOT OF GROUND: DARK, LOW-DOWN BLUES LAMENTS ("BLACK RIDER"), RISQUE NUMBERS ("I'LL KEEP SITTING ON IT"), WHIMSICAL TUNES ("WAS I DRUNK?"), AND DRIVING BOOGIES ("ALLEY BOOGIE"). AFTER 1941, WHITE'S POPULARITY FELL OFF SHARPLY, THOUGH SHE FRONTED AN ALL-WOMAN BAND IN THE LATE 40S (I CAN'T FIND ITS NAME), WORKED WITH BUMBLE BEE SLIM, AND PLAYED PIANO FROM 1949 TO '50 IN BIG BILL BROONZY'S LAUGHING TRIO (HE DESCRIBED HER AS A FRIENDLY, EASYGOING SOUL). AFTER THAT, THE STORY GETS SPOTTY—WHITE GIGGED IN DOWNERS GROVE IN 1969 AND HELD DOWN A CHICAGO RESIDENCY AT THE BLUE PUB ON IRVING PARK AT LEAST TILL THE MID-60S. SHE'S BELIEVED TO HAVE DIED IN CHICAGOLAND IN 1980. IN 2005 "ALLEY BOOGIE" WAS USED AS THE THEME OF BRITISH TV SERIES "LOVE SOUP," AND WHITE IS SURELY DUE FOR A WIDER REVIVAL.

TUNE INTO THE RADIO VERSION OF "THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC" ON "OUTSIDE THE LOOP" ON WGN RADIO 720 AM, SATURDAY AT 6AM WITH HOST MIKE STEPHEN. COMMENTS, IDEAS TO ARCHIVED @ OUTSIDETHELOOPRADIO.COM plasticew@hotmail.com



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4/20 - THE MURLOCS

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4/22 - PRIESTS
4/28 - ONRA
5/01 - DENGUE FEVER
5/03 - STRAND OF OAKS
5/05 - PICTURE THIS
5/07 - ICEAGE
5/08 - NICK WATERHOUSE
5/09 - MY BRIGHTEST DIAMOND
5/10 - TR/ST
5/11 - TACOCAT

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3/21 - OH PEP!
3/25 - METHYL ETHEL
3/27 - BETA RADIO
3/29 - STELLA DONNELLY
3/31 - TOW'RS
4/01 - OPEN MIKE EAGLE
4/03 - FOREIGN AIR
4/04 - CERAMIC ANIMAL + SPENDTIME PALACE
4/06 - BLAC RABBIT

4/07 - THE UNLIKELY CANDIDATES + THE BREVET
4/08 - TELEKINESIS
4/09 - THE DEAD TONGUES
4/10 - TENNYSON
4/11 - CHERRY POOLS
4/12 - CHARLIE BURG
4/15 - THE PALMS
4/17 - ANNA CLENDENING
4/23 - SASAMI
4/24 - DIANE COFFEE

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Marie Davidson
JOHN LONDONO

into a rousing Loretta Lynn cover as a down-and-dirty blues jam. Her most recent album, 2017's *Down Hearted Blues* (Signature), focuses on the latter. In a strolling version of "Down Hearted Blues," Jewell's stripped-down washboard and banjo arrangement and her nasal near yodel make the tune sound more like Jimmie Rodgers than Bessie Smith, who made it famous with her 1923 recording. Though Jewell's takes on songs written by other artists are appealing, her best work is on her own compositions. "Half-Broke Horse," from 2015's *Sundown Over Ghost Town*, has an easy-rolling groove that Waylon Jennings or Willie Nelson might appreciate and lyrics about freedom and having nothing left to lose: "On both sides of these bars / We're one and the same / Too wild for this world / Too

tame for mustangs." The pedal-steel-heavy "Some Things Weren't Meant to Be"—a painterly accretion of details surrounding a lost love the singer doesn't want to confront—may be even better. Country, blues, singer-songwriter ... Jewell's a worthy heir to all of her roots. —NOAH BERLATSKY

KAMAAL WILLIAMS *Jitwam opens. 9 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$15-\$18. 21+*

The line on the the current UK jazz scene is that its top exponents—Nubya Garcia, Shabaka Hutchings, Theon Cross—merge the American-bred genre with contemporary dance music, strains of UK hip-hop, and sounds of the African diaspora. Keyboardist Henry Wu, aka Kamaal Williams, brings a background in broken beat to the proceedings, and in his latest trio he leans a bit more heavily than his peers on Herbie Hancock's spiciest explorations. Following the dissolution of his previous group, Yussef Kamaal (which released only one album), Wu splayed his meticulously crafted soul-jazz and sprightly funk across the ten tracks of last year's *The Return* (Black Focus). Along with a handful of his other recent works, that album shows Wu's seamless transition between projects while exemplifying his love of hip-hop and sample culture; he's even made a recording titled *Catch the Loop 2: Kamaal x Wu Tang*, which is wholly given over to incorporating Wu-Tang Clan samples into music from *The Return*. While Wu's work will likely roil adherents of acoustic jazz, the worst criticism of it that anyone might be able to truck out is that at times it all just sounds like a spun-out mix of a Diga-bale Planets track. —DAVE CANTOR

SATURDAY 16

MICHAEL FOSTER & WEASEL WALTER See Thursday. Carol Genetti headlines; Michael Foster & Weasel Walter and Dave Rempis open. 9 PM, Cafe Mustache, 2313 N. Milwaukee, suggested donation \$5-10. 21+ ➔

Kamaal Williams GLAUCO CANALIS



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05/07 ANDY BLACK
05/11 THE DANDY WARHOLS
05/18 THE TWILIGHT SAD
@ SLEEPING VILLAGE
05/19 MOVEMENTS
05/23 PUP
05/24 BASEMENT & NOTHING
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SATURDAY
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THURSDAY MAR 14
Daphne 2019:
Research & Development with
JASMINE INFINITI / HI-VIS
RAQ E.G. / PROFESSOR WRECKS

FRIDAY MAR 15
Daphne 2019:
The Soft Machine with
MARIE DAVIDSON (LIVE)
ANGELICA / MTZ

SATURDAY MAR 16
Daphne 2019: Loose Ends with
SUZI ANALOGUE
DEBONAIR / CCL

SUNDAY MAR 17
Daphne 2019: Queen! with
LAUREN FLAX (LIVE)
DERRICK CARTER
MICHAEL SERAFINI
GARRETT DAVID

34 CHICAGO READER • MARCH 14, 2019



Darius Jones
KHOLOOD EID

SUNDAY17

MICHAEL FOSTER, DAVE REMPI, JASON ROEBKE, AND TYLER DAMON See *Thursday*, 9 PM, *Hungry Brain*, 2319 W. Belmont. 21+

MONDAY18

DARIUS JONES See also *Saturday*, 7:30 PM, *Experimental Sound Studio*, 5925 N. Ravenswood, \$10.

The ten albums Darius Jones has made as a leader or coleader since 2009 reveal an artist who can't be pinned down. As part of the collective Little Women, the New York-based alto saxophonist combined extended instrumental techniques, postpunk rhythms, and a ritual demeanor reminiscent of martial arts practice to create devastating

concert experiences. The compositions he's played on his trio and quartet albums for the Aum Fidelity label steer closer to postbop jazz forms, with mercurial changes in mood and structures anchored by bluff and bluesy horn playing. His two duo records with pianist Matthew Shipp are stocked with pithy, abstract chamber improvisations. And he doesn't play at all on *The Oversoul Manual*, a choral work for four female voices. Jones will offer a solo set at the Experimental Sound Studio (though he hasn't yet recorded a solo recital), which will be followed by a sit-down interview with local drummer Tim Daisy. Two days earlier, Jones and drummer Michael Vatcher, a fellow New Yorker, will play at Constellation in a quartet led by local cornetist Josh Berman. The combo, which also includes bassist Jason Roebke, is breaking in material for an impending recording session. —**BILL MEYER**

WEDNESDAY20

BLACK MOTH SUPER RAINBOW Steve Hauschildt opens. 9 PM, *Sleeping Village*, 3734 W. Belmont, \$20-\$22. 21+

For nearly two decades Pittsburgh band Black Moth Super Rainbow have twisted psych, lo-fi electronics, trip-hop, noise, and cybernetic pop into shapes so wondrous that the most imaginative balloon-animal-

making clowns might envy them. The group's seventh album, last year's *Panic Blooms* (Rad Cult), brims with Technicolor synth notes that ooze like cough syrup. BMSR have long revelled in the zone where pastel dreams flit into Day-Glo nightmares and back again, and this album holds listeners in a particularly foreboding space: through processed murmurs, front man Tobacco unravels a brief passage about someone having their mouth split open by a razor blade hidden in a tangerine—a narrative that also aptly describes the veiled, enticing horror in BMSR's music. Steve SLV, aka local producer Steve Reidell of the Hood Internet and Air Credits, plays bass in the band's current live iteration. —**LEOR GALIL**

Black Moth Super Rainbow COURTESY OF ARTIST



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| 3.25 EIGHTH BLACKBIRD | 4.6 WILLIE NILE |
| 3.26 VAN HUNT | 4.8-9 MIKI HOWARD |
| 3.27 THE TIM O'BRIEN BAND
WITH DANNY BURNS | |



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UPCOMING SHOWS

- | | |
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| 3.16-17 LOS LONELY BOYS | 4.12-13 MARTIN SEXTON WITH CHRIS TRAPPER |
| 3.29 THE VERVE PIPE | 4.14 STORY SESSIONS |
| 3.30-31 WILL DOWNING | 4.14 JOURNEYMAN - A TRIBUTE TO ERIC CLAPTON |
| 4.1 KAITLYN BRISTOWE - OFF THE VINE (LIVE PODCAST) | 4.15 GLENN JONES |
| 4.2 DAVID ARCHULETA | 4.16-17 MARC BROUSSARD |
| 4.7 STORY JAM- 12PM | 4.18 GRAHAM PARKER WITH ADAM EZRA |
| 4.7 TUSK - FLEETWOOD MAC EXPERIENCE | 4.19 CARBON LEAF |
| 4.11 DOWNTOWN SEDER DAVID BROZA, MICHAEL MCDERMOTT, CORKY SIEGEL, LYNNE JORDAN, RICH JONES, KEN KRIMSTEIN, T.J. SHANOFF, NAOMI SPUNGEN | 4.20 BRAD WILLIAMS |
| | 4.21 DAVE DAVIES |

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PIANO & SONGS**

MAR 24

**FREDDY JONES BAND
WITH BRETT WISCONS**

MAR 28

**ROBERT GLASPER TRIO
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EARLY WARNINGS

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME



Cupcakke © QURISSY LOPEZ

NEW

Adventure Club 5/3, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Bad Bunny 3/24, 7 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont 🍷
Adam Ben Ezra 6/22, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston 🍷
Dierks Bentley 8/23, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM 🍷
Big Bad Voodoo Daddy 5/25, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 3/14, noon 🍷
Victory Boyd, Infinity's Song 4/10, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 3/14, noon 🍷
Built to Spill 7/5-6, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 3/15, noon, 17+
Bush, Live, Our Lady Peace 9/6, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM 🍷
Bill Callahan 7/7, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM, 17+
Chi-Town Blues Fest with Syleena Johnson, Sir Charles Jones, Shirley Brown, and more 3/23, 8 PM, the Venue at Horseshoe Casino, Hammond
Choir Boy 6/6, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Stef Chura, French Vanilla 7/5, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
George Clinton's Farewell Tour with Parliament Funkadelic and more 5/31, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Combo Chimbita 7/8, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Dehd, Hecks, Mavis the Dog 5/10, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Raheem DeVaughn 6/7, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 3/14, noon 🍷

Digable Planets, Kweku Collins 6/20, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM, 18+
Earth, Wind, and Fire 7/27-28, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM 🍷
Sara Evans, Barker Family Band 5/17, 7 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 3/14, noon 🍷
Faux Ferocious, Glyders, Junegrass 4/12, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Film School, Mint Field 5/5, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Kirk Fletcher 5/13, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston 🍷
Mary Flower 4/28, 3 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 🍷
Foxwarren 7/6, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Jonas Friddle 4/26, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 🍷
Kevin Garrett 5/12, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Thu 3/14, 10 AM 🍷
Gipsy Kings 7/19, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre 🍷
Graham/Bat Dawid/Kohl/Kessler, Ava Mendoza, Genetti/Rousay 5/2, 9 PM, Elastic 🍷
Glen Hansard 3/31, 7 PM, Thalia Hall, sold out, 17+
Elsa Harris, Pastor Donald Gay, Erwin Helfer 4/27, 7 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 🍷
Holly Herndon 5/22, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM, 17+
Mason Jennings 5/31, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 3/14, noon 🍷
Glenn Jones 4/15, 7:30 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 3/14, noon 🍷
Killing Joke 5/18, 8 PM, Bottom

Lounge
Lazer Lloyd 8/4, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston 🍷
Leikeli47 3/22, 7 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Little Church 6/2, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Mary Ocher + Your Government, Forced into Femininity 5/21, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
James McMurtry Band 6/7, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston 🍷
Mendoza/Graham/Abrams/Damon, Claire Rousay, Graham/Reid 5/4, 2 PM, Rosehill Cemetery 🍷
Mendoza/Rempis Duo, Forbes Graham, Rousay/Kleijn/Stephenson 5/3, 9 PM, Elastic 🍷
Nick Murphy 5/29, 9 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM, 18+
Connan Mockasin, Helena Deland 7/11, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Mystery Lights 6/25, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Ben Nichols 6/11, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM 🍷
No Men, Rad Payoff, Evening Standards 3/23, 9 PM, Hideout
Outlaw Music Festival with Willie Nelson, Phil Lesh, Avett Brothers, Alison Krauss, and more 6/28, 1:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park 🍷
Wendel Patrick and Ursula Rucker with Loyola University Choruses 3/22, 6:30 PM, Loyola University, Mundelein Center Auditorium 🍷
Liz Phair, Juliana Hatfield 6/22, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, 18+
Ben Platt 5/3, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre 🍷

Rascal Flatts, Billy Currington 5/18, 7:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park 🍷
R&B Only with Dauché, Jabari 5/18, 8:30 PM, Concord Music Hall
Ryen, Myles Bryant, Dewey Depp 3/23, 9 PM, Subterranean, 17+
San Holo, Taska Black 4/27, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Sen Morimoto 4/12, 8 PM, Co-Prosperity Sphere, 17+
Slushii 5/18, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Smino 3/23, 8 PM; 3/24, 7 PM, House of Blues 🍷
Jorja Smith, Kali Uchis 5/28, 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom 🍷
Vera Sola 5/19, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Southern Culture on the Skids 7/10, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM 🍷
Sum 4/1 5/26, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 3/15 🍷
Timmy Trumpet 6/22, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Tommi Zender 6/2, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston 🍷
Toots and the Maytals, Shamarr Allen 6/21, 6 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM, 18+
Wu-Tang Clan, Reignwolf 6/1, 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+
Yo La Tengo, Minus 5 6/23, 7 PM, Temperance Beer Company, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/15, 10 AM, 18+

UPDATED

Ryan Bingham, Americans 4/5, 7:30 PM, Park West, sold out, 18+
Chicago Open Air with System of a Down, Tool, Ghost, Cult, and more 5/18-19, 2 PM, Seat-Geek Stadium, Bridgeview, The Prodigy canceled; The Cult added 🍷
KVB 10/26, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, rescheduled from 3/29; tickets previously purchased will be valid for new date
Massive Attack 3/23, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, canceled; show will be rescheduled for date TBA in fall 2019. Tickets purchased for 3/23 will be honored for new date
John Mayer 8/14-15, 7:30 PM, United Center, second show added Thu 8/15 🍷
Alice Merton 4/26, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, sold out 🍷
Pup, Ratboys 5/4, 7:30 PM; 5/23, 7 PM, Metro, 5/4 show sold out 🍷
Jeff Tweedy 3/22-23, 8 PM, The Vic, 3/23 sold out, 18+
We Three 3/28, 7:30 PM, Subterranean, moved to Subterranean; tickets purchased for Park West will be honored 🍷

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UPCOMING

Architects, Thy Art Is Murder 5/25, 6:30 PM, Concord Music Hall 🍷
BadXchannels, Midoca 4/10, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Baroness, Deafheaven 3/31, 6:30 PM, Riviera Theatre 🍷
Be Forest, Lightfoils, Blue Unit 3/19, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Big Wild 3/22, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Captain Beyond 4/12, 8 PM; 4/14, 7 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, 4/12 sold out, second show added
Cowboy Junkies 4/13-14, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 🍷
Cupcakke 3/21, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Cursive, Mewithoutyou 5/8, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Downlink, Al Ross, Eliminate, Phiso 6/14, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, rescheduled from 5/3, 18+
Drab Majesty, Facs 5/17, 6:30 PM, Garfield Park
Conservatory 🍷
Earth, Helms Alee 6/23, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Gooch Palms 3/24, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Steve Gunn, Gun Outfit 4/19, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Peter Dinklage, Al Ross, Eliminate, Phiso 6/14, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, rescheduled from 5/3, 18+
Kemba, Brittney Carter, Calid B 4/6, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Ben Pirani 3/22, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Rise Against, Face to Face 4/28, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre 🍷
Lucy Roche & Suzzy Roche 4/6, 4 PM, Evanston History Center, Evanston 🍷
Royal Trux 5/12, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Schlippenbach Trio 3/27-28, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Scientists 4/10, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Shingo2 3/21, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Schlippenbach Trio 3/27-28, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Damo Suzuki's Network 5/4-5, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Ry X 3/26, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Xiu Xiu 5/17, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Yob, Voivod 3/27, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

GOSSIP WOLF HAS always assumed that water and stringed instruments don't mix, but **Katinka Kleijn** (who plays in the CSO and the International Contemporary Ensemble) and **Lia Kohl** (who's in Mocrep and CabinFever) point out that their cellos are made of the same stuff as many canoes and sailboats! At 7 PM on Saturday, March 16, the duo performs **"Water on the Bridge"** at Eckhart Park's natatorium. "We will improvise with cello and water sounds, field recordings, and live electronics by **Daniel DeHaan**," says Kleijn, "as well as moving, floating, and swimming with 30 cellos in the pool."

Since reporting on the rejuvenation of avant-rock/comic-book label **Skin Graft Records** in 2016, Gossip Wolf has been heartened to watch it keep burping up brain-flaying jams such as last year's Cheer-Accident epic, *Fades*. On Friday, March 15, Skin Graft drops the compilation **Post Now: Round One: Chicago vs. New York**, which features four ensembles from each city, paired off in musical battles (that is, each band gets two songs). The locals are **Bobby Conn, Cheer-Accident, Tijuana Hercules**, and **Lovely Little Girls**, while the NY squad includes former Chicagoans the **Flying Luttenbachers**, recently restarted by leader Weasel Walter after a decade's dormancy, and a Walter-adjacent project called **Cellular Chaos**.

You know the old saying: winter isn't over till the gearheads, avant-garde composers, and experimental-music weirdos come out of their burrows and compete to create the best combo of homemade chili and synthesizer soundtrack! On Sunday, March 17, the **Empty Bottle** hosts the ninth annual **Chili-Synthesizer Cook-Off**, with defending champion **Whitney Johnson** (aka Matchess) battling for the coveted golden peanut trophy against **Nick Ciontea** (aka synth maker and video artist Brownshoesonly), **Alexei Khokhlov**, and **Alex Beam**. Gossip Wolf recommends bringing your own antacids and earplugs. —J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

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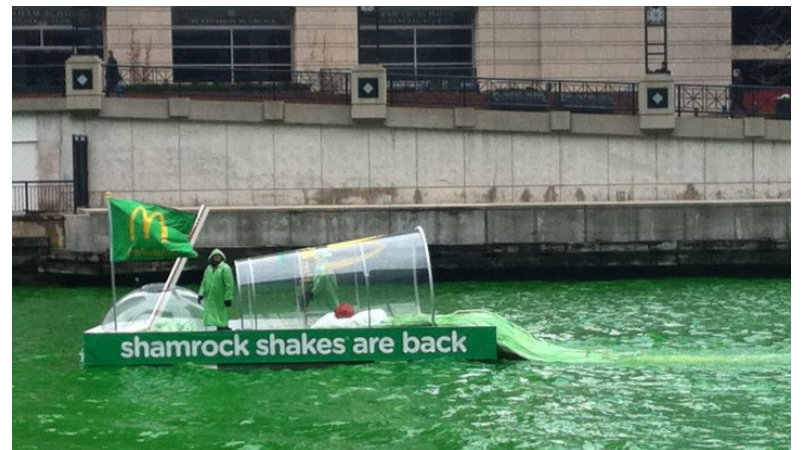
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Reckoning with abusers

Advice on disentangling love from predation.

Q: My grandfather died when I was a child. I remember only one incident happening to me—during a cuddle session, he

encouraged me to put my mouth on his penis, and then told me to let it be our little secret. I heard rumors as an adult that he molested other

kids in the neighborhood. He also had a sexual relationship with my mother. She says nothing happened as a child. But as an adult, he started

telling her he loved her in a romantic way and that he wanted to take nude Polaroids of her, and she let him. And she loved him—she and her sisters all pretty much idolized him. I did lots of therapy in the late 1980s and early 90s. I read books, I journaled, I talked to my mom and tried to understand what she experienced. And I moved on as much as anyone could. So now it's 2019 and I'm almost 50. My mom just moved into a nursing home, and while cleaning out her drawers, I found the Polaroids my grandfather took of her. I know it was him because he is in some of them, taken into a mirror as she goes down on him. In the photos, she looks happy. I know she was probably acting, because that's what he wanted from her. Was it terrible abuse or forbidden love? She kept the photos. Were they fond memories?
—WHIRLWIND OF EMOTIONS

A: I think you should sit down and watch all four hours of *Leaving Neverland*, the new HBO documentary by British filmmaker Dan Reed. It focuses on the experiences of Wade Robson and James Safechuck, two now-adult men who were

sexually abused by pop star Michael Jackson when they were boys. Allegedly.

The second most disturbing part of the film after the graphic descriptions of child rape—or the third most disturbing part after the credulity/culpability of Robson's and Safechuck's parents—may be what the men have to say about Jackson. Both describe their abuser in romantic terms and they both remain deeply conflicted about their feelings for Jackson then and now. It was their affection—their desire to protect him and to safeguard what Jackson convinced them was a secret and a bond they shared—that led both men to lie to law enforcement officials when Jackson was accused of sexually abusing different boys.

Your mother, like Robson and Safechuck, lied to protect her abuser. She may have held on to those photos for the same reason Robson and Safechuck say they defended Jackson: She loved her father, and she was so damaged by what he did to her that she felt “loved” and “special” in the same way that Jackson's alleged abuse once made Robson and Safechuck feel loved and special. So as horrifying as it is to contem-

plate, WOE, your mother may have held on to those photos because they do represent what are, for her, “fond memories.”

Leaving Neverland demonstrates that sexual predators like your grandfather and like Jackson—fucking manipulators with a gift for making their victims feel loved and special—plant ticking time bombs in their victims. Even if a victim doesn't initially experience their abuse as a violation and as violence, WOE, a reckoning almost inevitably comes. It doesn't sound like your mother ever had her reckoning, so she never came to grips with what was done to her and, tragically, what was done to you. Just as denial and compartmentalization enabled Jackson and facilitated his crimes (and allowed the world to enjoy Jackson's music despite what was staring us all in the face), denial and compartmentalization allowed your grandfather to rape his daughter, his granddaughter, and scores of other children. You have a right to be angry with the adults in your family who failed to protect you from a known predator.

I'm glad your grandfather died when you were young. It's tempting to wish he'd never been born, WOE, but then you would never have been born, and I'm glad you're here. By telling the truth, you're shattering the silence that allowed an abuser to groom and prey on children across multiple generations of your family. Your grandfather can't victimize anyone else, but by speaking up—by refusing to look the other way—you've made it harder for other predators to get away with what your grandfather did. **RS**

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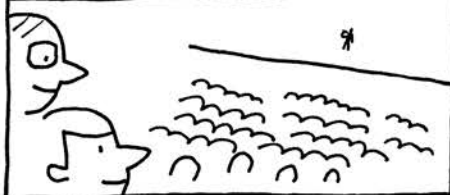
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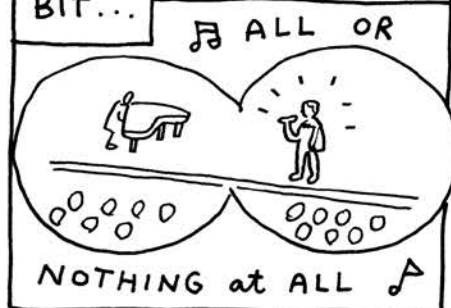
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PRAIRIE POTHOLE

IN 1993, MY DAD TOOK ME TO SEE SINATRA PERFORM at the CIVIC OPERA HOUSE



THE LADY NEXT TO US LET ME BORROW HER OPERA GLASSES FOR A BIT...



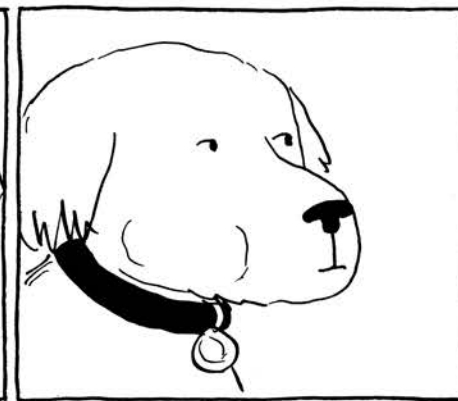
AFTERWARDS, WE WENT TO ROSEBUD ON TAYLOR STREET, CUZ MY DAD THOUGHT MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, POSSIBLY, SINATRA MIGHT SHOW UP THERE FOR DINNER...



THAT WAS the NIGHT I ATE A SQUID FOR the FIRST TIME



Violet PRIVATE EYE By Melissa Mendes



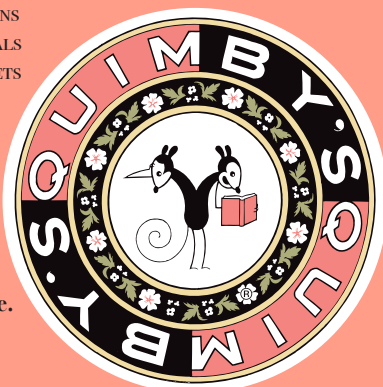
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